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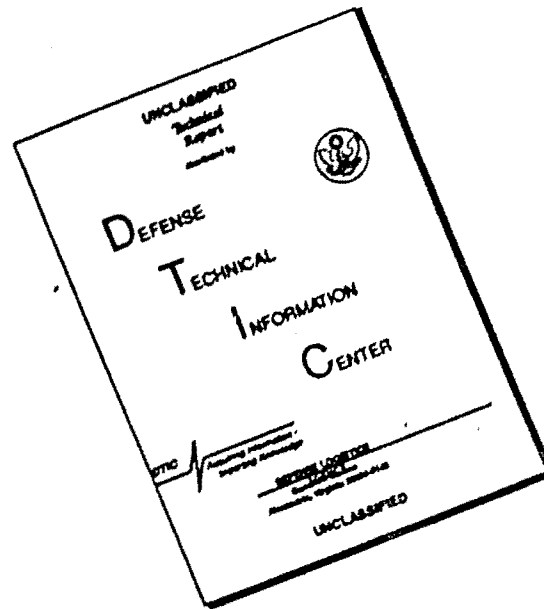
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THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF
SOVIET OCCUPATION

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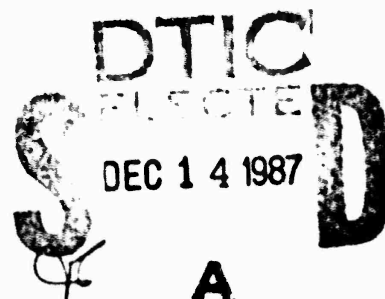
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AFGHANISTAN

THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF SOVIET OCCUPATION

J. BRUCE AMSTUTZ

1986



National Defense University
Washington, D.C. 20319-6000

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To "Spike" and Mary Ann Dubs
who gave so much for Afghanistan

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Foreword

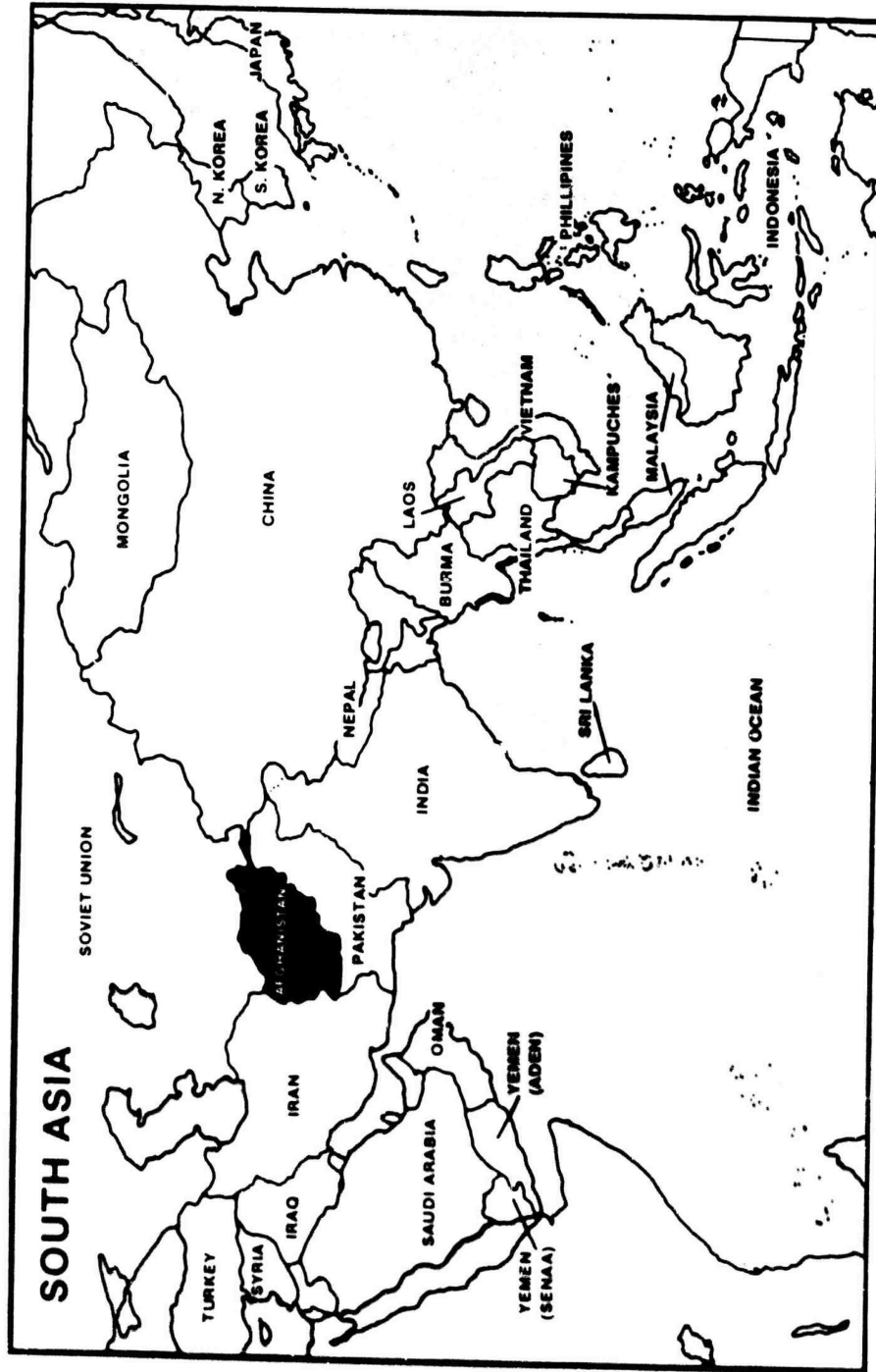
When Soviet military forces invaded Afghanistan in late 1979, the invasion was, at once, an attempt to save a tottering Marxist government and a warning to both East and West that the Brezhnev Doctrine of "necessary intervention" would be enforced.

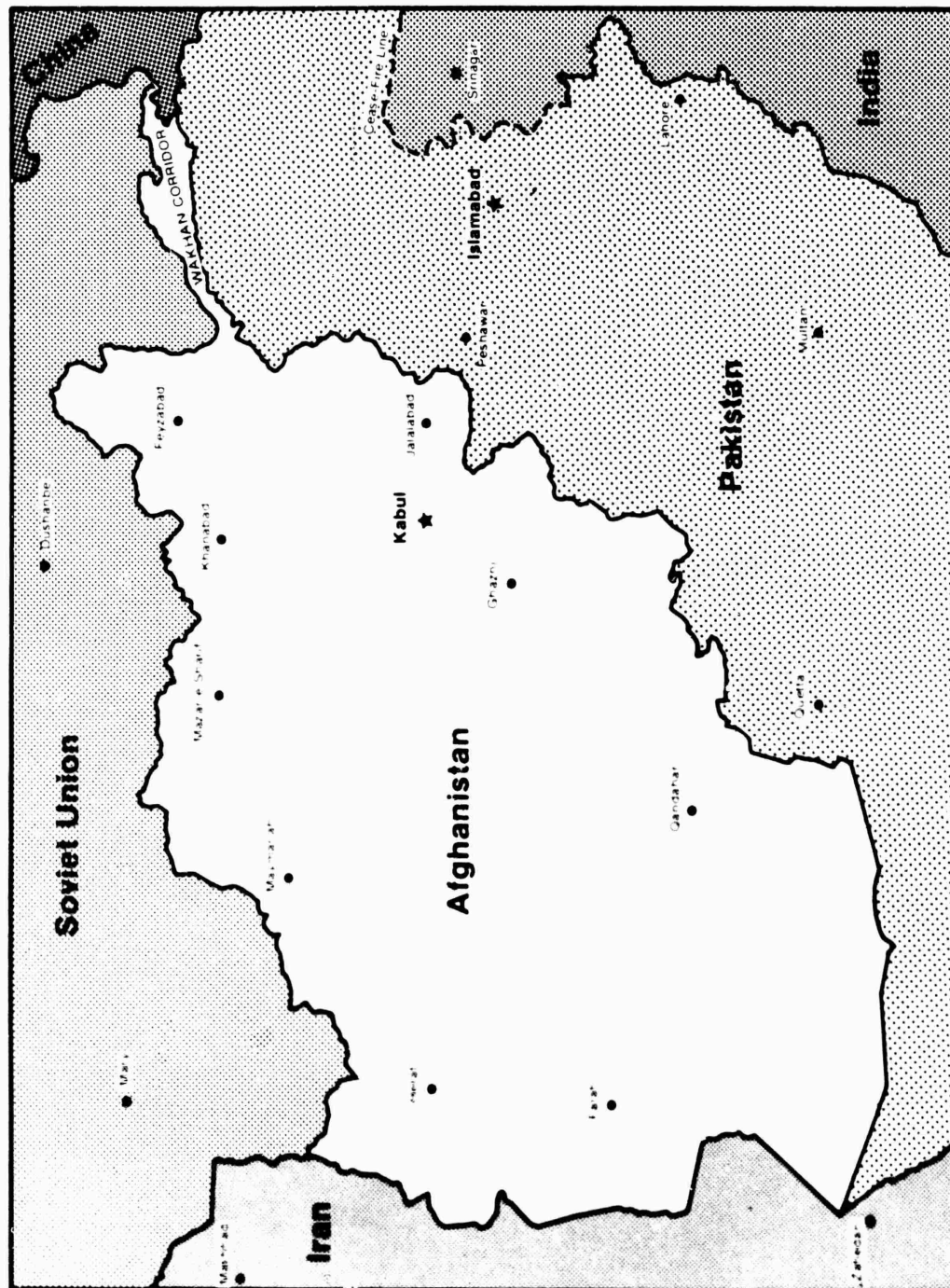
Dr. J. Bruce Amstutz, US charge d'affaires in Kabul from 1979 to 1980, begins his treatment of the first five years of Soviet occupation with an historical overview of years of Russian meddling in Afghan affairs. He follows this account with a first-hand report of the 1979 invasion, then analyzes that intervention from political, military, and economic perspectives. Among the important issues Dr. Amstutz discusses are the numerous Afghan political factions—pro-Soviet and resistance—their leaders, the human rights and refugee problems, diplomatic efforts to settle the conflict, and Soviet measures to repress and indoctrinate the Afghans.

The Afghans, though, as their history of fierce tribal resistance to foreign invaders shows, are not being easily tamed: Soviet occupation of Afghanistan is proving costly for the USSR in manpower, rubles, and international opinion. As the author concludes, the Afghans' vigorous resistance of Moscow's attempt to project power serves the interests of the Free World and deserves Western support. The National Defense University is pleased to publish the work of Dr. Amstutz—work which brings form and clarity to the unfolding political and human tragedy of Afghanistan and its people.



Richard D. Lawrence
Lieutenant General, US Army
President, National Defense
University





Preface

I first saw Afghanistan in 1975 as a tourist. Like many other Westerners I long had been intrigued by that mountainous land. From childhood I had enjoyed the romantic stories of British India—and Afghanistan was part of that legacy of literature, a country that conjured up images of desperate colonial battles fought against proud and fierce tribesmen.

No episode of British India so captured the imagination of schoolboys like myself as did the disastrous retreat from Kabul of the Army of the Indus in 1842, the dramatic ending of which is immortalized by a painting in the Tate Gallery, London. That picture shows a Dr. William Brydon, "covered with cuts and contusions . . . and dreadfully exhausted," slowly approaching the British outpost at Jalalabad on his lame horse. He was the lone survivor (so it was thought at the time) of the 17,000-man army and camp followers who unwisely had retreated from Kabul in deep snow the week before.* En route back to India the army had been repeatedly attacked and decimated. Finally, on a stony hill near Gandamak, a half-day's horse journey from Jalalabad, the last 40-man British army remnant formed a circle on the crest and, like a later incident near the Little Bighorn River on another continent, died to the last man.

For those drawn to Afghanistan in the mid-1970s, the country also had other more tangible attractions. For one, the approach overland to Kabul was a delight. The 150-mile paved highway stretching

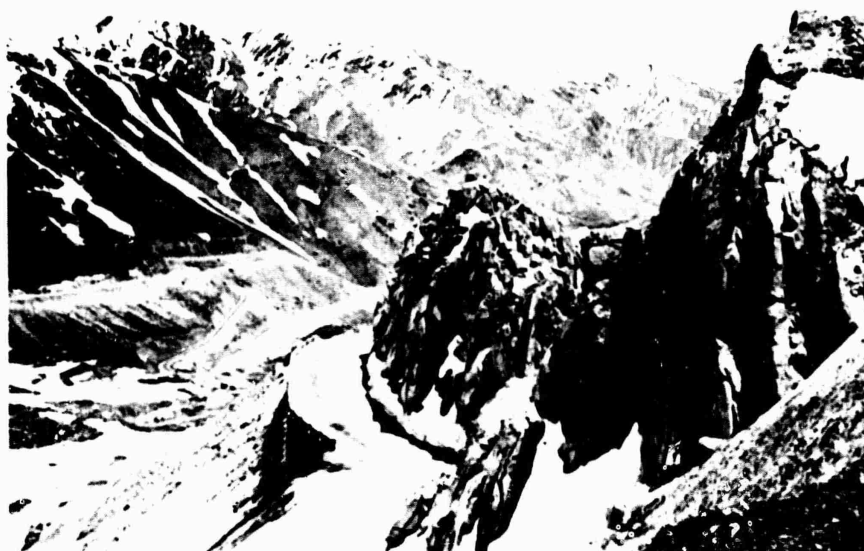
* Eyewitness account by (Major) Henry Havelock, quoted in Charles Miller, *Khyber: British India's North West Frontier* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1977), p. 79.

from Peshawar, Pakistan, over the Khyber Pass and upward to Kabul was a splendid road. Designed in part by American engineers, it was well maintained and so lightly used one could drive for miles without encountering another vehicle. The highway mostly paralleled the Kabul River; and on its way passed through gorges and along attractive man-made lakes set off against a backdrop of snow-covered peaks. Though most of the landscape was stony and desertlike, the wider portions of the river valleys were green oases of trees and cultivated fields.

Eventually the highway reached Kabul at 5,000 feet elevation, a height that gave the capital city one of Asia's most salubrious climates. Before the 1978 Marxist coup d'etat Kabul was a pleasant city of 600,000 inhabitants. Though poor economically, it was spared the eyesore slums so visible in other Asian cities. The Afghans themselves were an imposing people, the men tall and self-assured and the women attractive.

For most tourists Kabul itself offered few special attractions. Many travelers continued on, especially to the Shangri-la-like valley of Bamian, which, at an elevation of 8,000 feet, once was a renowned Buddhist center and still was one of the prettiest places in Asia. Other tourists made a point of seeing the Soviet-built Salang Pass tunnel, at 11,000 feet the highest highway tunnel in the world, while some pushed on to view the awesome walls and ruined mosques and mausoleums of that once great Central Asian metropolis, Balkh, where Marco Polo once had tarried. For a privileged few, perhaps the most interesting site of all was remote Ai-Khanoum, the ruins of a 350 B.C. Greek city, with amphitheater and remains of a Corinthian-columned agora, built on a spectacular bluff overlooking the river that now serves as the border with the Soviet Union.

A decade has passed since my first visit. The French archeologists who labored so many years at Ai-Khanoum are gone, the once fine hotel complex at Bamian long since has burned to the ground, and the highway between Kabul and the border post near the Khyber Pass regularly is ambushed by Afghan guerrillas. The once burgeoning tourist trade has vanished. In Kabul's celebrated Chicken Street, where Western and Japanese tourists once browsed in handi-craft and antique shops, one now finds groups of heavily guarded Soviet advisers and their wives, hastily doing their grocery and other



The Salang Pass

shopping before climbing back into their buses to return to their barbed-wire- and tank-guarded residential quarters.

The account that follows tells how this dramatic change came about; but more especially it relates the record of the first five years of Soviet occupation. Though the 27 April 1978 Marxist coup d'etat precipitated the events that brought about the Soviet intervention almost two years later, in late December 1979, the origins of that intervention date back about 140 years. The Russians first evinced an interest in Afghanistan in 1837. Throughout the Tsarist period that interest grew, and after 1917 was continued by the Soviets. To understand the background of the Soviet invasion one needs to appreciate Moscow's long interest in Afghanistan and the depth of Russian and then Soviet involvement. Hence, this account first examines that historical interest and then focuses on the recent Soviet effort to pacify its latest military conquest.

SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS Initially, this author was concerned that little public source material might be available for the period following the 1979 Soviet intervention. This concern

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proved unfounded, and although the archives of the US Department of State and other governments were not yet open to scholars this handicap did not prove insuperable.

A large corpus of primary source material exists. This material falls into two categories: official publications and private publications. The most valuable official sources were the US Government's *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* (FBIS) and *Joint Publications Research Service* (JPRS) publication series covering Afghanistan and issued almost daily. Valuable too were the US Department of State's special reports to the public on Afghanistan, and the British Commonwealth and Foreign Office public reports.

Several privately sponsored publications on Afghanistan were indispensable. In this category were the Afghan Information Centre's *Monthly Bulletin* (Peshawar), *Afghan Realities* (Paris and Peshawar), *The Letter from the B.I.A.* (Paris), and probably the most scholarly publication of all, *Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan* (Paris). Other useful works were the *Afghanistan Forum Newsletter* (New York) and reports and articles in *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *Baltimore Sun*, and *Kabul New Times*.

For accounts about the short time period between the Marxist coup in April 1978 and the Soviet takeover at the end of 1979, three scholarly works stand out: Henry S. Bradsher's *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*; Thomas T. Hammond's *Red Flag Over Afghanistan*; and Anthony Arnold's *Two-Party Communism*. No serious student of the period can ignore them.

Some of the most valuable eyewitness reporting available were the accounts of Western newsmen (many of them French) who visited Afghanistan with the resistance or, less often, managed to visit Soviet-controlled Afghan territory. Also often helpful were accounts of Afghan refugees, whose stories fill the pages of the private publications issued in Paris and Peshawar. These accounts tell a bitter story of life in Afghanistan.

Adding an invaluable dimension to printed sources of information were interviews and discussions I had with more than two dozen Afghan emigres on both sides of the Atlantic. Almost all requested anonymity for fear that disclosure of their names would lead to reprisals against their relatives in Afghanistan.

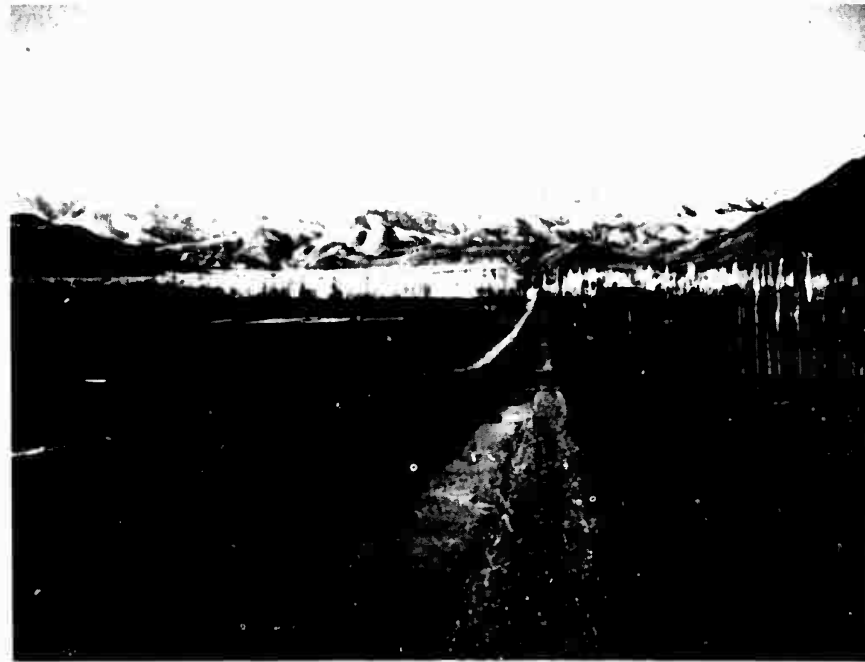


Photo by author

Snow-covered peaks in Lowgar province

Collections of documents on Afghanistan are scattered about the United States and Western Europe, but this author found three collections particularly helpful. The single most comprehensive collection probably is the Bibliotheca Afghanica at Liestal, Switzerland, the creation of a devoted Swiss archivist, Paul Bucherer-Dietschi. Two other important collections are those in the Radio Liberty Research Division archives (Munich) and at the library and Center for Afghanistan Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. I received immense cooperation from the directors and librarians of all three institutions. Without their assistance I would have missed much valuable material.

I also am much indebted to the Committee for a Free Afghanistan for furnishing many of the photographs used throughout the book. Special thanks also go to Olivier Roy of *Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan* for the use of maps showing political party affiliations of guerrilla groups as of the end of 1983, and to Roland Michaud, noted French photographer, for permission to use the picture of the Afghan Sage.

I also wish to give credit to American officials in several agencies in Washington, D.C., who gave their time to explain military and diplomatic developments or to steer me to useful sources. Without their help I inadvertently might have committed factual errors or overlooked relevant points. Still, the judgments made in this book are my own and are not intended to reflect or question any official policy. Without, too, the generous resources and patience of the staff of the Research Directorate of the National Defense University this work could not have been completed as envisaged. Though my professional background might make some readers question whether I could be a disinterested observer, I would like to think that my personal knowledge and contacts have been more of an asset than a liability in a scholarly effort of this kind.

In any case, the facts presented in this volume speak for themselves. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan is a sad chapter in that country's history and the events connected with the occupation need to be followed and recounted. This work is a contribution to that end.



Photo courtesy Joseph Kessel - Les Cavaliers

The Great Game: 1837-1944

My last words to you, my son and successor, are: Never trust the Russians.

King Abdur Rahman Khan (1901)

ORIGINS OF SOVIET INTEREST IN AFGHANISTAN



HORTLY AFTER THE 27 APRIL 1978 COUP D'ETAT THAT brought the small, semi-clandestine communist party to power, the American Embassy in Kabul cabled Washington: "The Russians have finally won the 'Great Game.'"¹

Although the Embassy's comment historically was not strictly accurate it did contain an element of truth. For a century and a half the Russians had shown an interest in Afghanistan. But not until that April 1978 morning—and more especially after their December 1979 invasion—did they succeed in establishing a dominant influence. The term "Great Game" had been invented by the British in the 1840s to describe activities of the rival British and Russian intelligence services along the unsettled northern frontier of British India.²

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the term had gained a broader meaning. It referred to British and Russian rivalry for paramount influence not only on India's northwest frontier but in the whole region between Russia and India—a region that included all of Afghanistan. The term "Great Game" later achieved widespread popularity when it served as the basis for the plot of Rudyard Kipling's widely read novel *Kim* (1901).

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Although Russia had coveted warm-water ports since the time of Peter the Great (1682-1725), and Russian territorial expansion into Central Asia had begun as early as 1734, Moscow's interest in what is now Afghanistan did not manifest itself until the late 1830s.

That interest first was exhibited in 1837 when a Russian-backed Persian military force attempted to seize the city of Herat in what is today western Afghanistan. At the time Herat was ruled by a local shah, related to but not controlled by the Afghan ruler in Kabul. The Persian court was under some Russian influence and the army facing Herat included Russian advisers and mercenaries. The British, fearing that Persian-Russian control of Herat would pose a threat to the adjoining Afghan city-state of Kandahar and thus to British India, intervened diplomatically and militarily to stop the Persian force. British motives at the time were summed up by the British envoy to Persia as follows:

*Herat once annexed to Persia may become . . . the residence of a Russian consular agent who would from thence push its researches and communications, avowed and secret, throughout Afghanistan.*¹

As it turned out, the Persian attempt to annex Herat failed. A combination of British diplomatic pressure and a spirited defense by the Herat forces, aided by a remarkable East India Company officer, Lieutenant Eldred Pottinger, forced a Persian withdrawal. Years later an influential British official in India, Sir Henry Durand, described British concerns at the time as "exaggerated fears of Russian power and intrigue."²

Nevertheless, the incident represented the first manifestation of Russian involvement in Afghanistan and the first of many confrontations between Britain and Russia in the region during the nineteenth century.

RUSSIAN AND BRITISH MOTIVES

The justifications for Russian territorial expansion into south central Asia were archetypical of nineteenth century European

imperialist thought. Russian motives are aptly elucidated by the following two classic Russian statements:

(1) Russian Manifesto Justifying the Expedition against the Khan of Khiva (1839)

*The rights of Russia, the security of her trade, the tranquility of her subjects, and the dignity of the state call for decisive measures . . . to make the inhabitants . . . esteem and respect the Russian name, and finally, to strengthen in that part of Asia the lawful influence to which Russia has a right, and which alone can insure the maintenance of peace.*⁵

(2) Memorandum of Prince Gorchakov (1864)

*The position of Russia in Central Asia is that of all civilized states which come into contact with half-savage, wandering tribes possessing no fixed social organization. It invariably happens in such cases that the interests of security on the frontier, and of commercial relations, compel the more civilized state to exercise a certain ascendancy over neighbors whose turbulence and nomad instincts render them difficult to live with. . . . The greatest difficulty is in knowing where to stop.*⁶

Additional Russian motives, which became apparent in the last quarter of the century, were to weaken British power and secure access to a warm-water port. Most Russian statesmen and military leaders of the period agreed that the stronger Russia was in Central Asia, the weaker Britain would be in India; and the weaker Britain was in India, the more accommodating Britain would be in Europe.⁷ During this period a number of plans, hypothetical and otherwise, for a Russian invasion of India were revealed and publicized.⁸

Prince Gorchakov's problem of "knowing where to stop" was precisely the point that worried Britain—for some 70 years. Russian territorial expansion southeastward toward the Indian subcontinent was viewed by London as a threat to Britain's expanding possessions in India. Britain's distrust of Russia is well described in the following letter by Foreign Minister Lord Palmerston:

The policy and practice of the Russian government has always been to push forward its encroachments as fast and as far as apathy or want of firmness of other governments would allow it

*to go; but always to stop and retire when it was met with decided resistance, and then to wait for the next favorable opportunity to make another spring on its intended victim.*⁹

Afghanistan, though weak and sometimes fragmented during the nineteenth century, was considered, in the words of British statesman J. F. Standish, as the "most effectual barrier against Russian encroachment in whatever direction the Russians might attempt to advance on India."¹⁰

ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONFRONTATIONS

Until the 1907 Anglo-Russian Treaty laid to rest Anglo-Tsarist rivalry in the region, the 70 years between 1837 and 1907 saw steady Russian territorial expansion toward Afghanistan and repeated British efforts to prevent Russian power from approaching the Indian subcontinent.

Beginning with the clash in Herat in 1837, hardly a decade passed without some dispute arising between the two European powers relating to Afghanistan. The record is long and complex, as illustrated by the following developments:

- In 1838-39, after the unsuccessful Russian-backed Persian attempt on Herat, London obtained from St. Petersburg the first of nine Russian assurances and disclaimers of any designs on the integrity of Afghanistan or against British rule in India.

- Stimulated by fears of growing Russian and Persian designs in the Afghanistan region, the British precipitated the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-42), aimed at placing in power in Kabul a pro-British ruler firmly committed to "counteract Russian influence in that quarter."¹¹ Despite an early and spectacular military failure (the disastrous 1842 British retreat from Kabul), the British won the war and succeeded in their objective. An Afghan leader amenable to British concerns, Dost Mohammad, was accepted as ruler. This able monarch proceeded to reunite the Afghan provinces in the north, west, and south, including the small states of Herat and Kandahar.

- In 1869 the Khan of Bukhara in Central Asia became a Tsarist vassal, bringing Russian power south to the banks of the Amu Darya river, the present border for most of north Afghanistan. Fearful that Russia's position in Bukhara would lead to Russian designs on his territory, the then Afghan ruler, Amir Sher Ali, twice turned to the

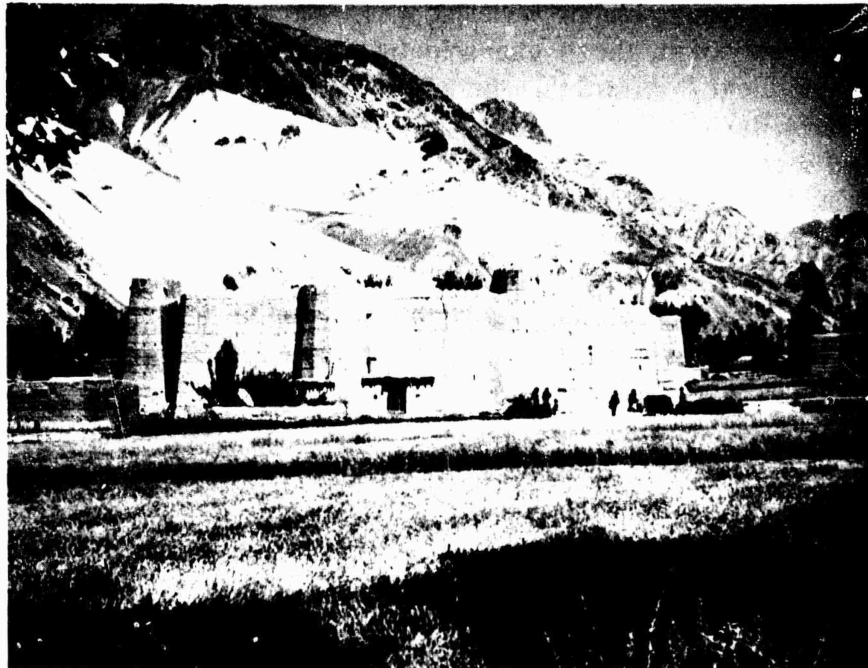


Photo by Author

Feudal residence in Parwan province

British for assurances of help should the Russians invade. The Amir may have been frightened by the writings of Russian journalists and others urging annexation of northern Afghanistan, on grounds that the Hindu Kush mountain range, rather than the Amu Darya river, made a natural and necessary frontier for newly acquired Russian territories in Central Asia.¹² Although the Viceroy of India, Lord Northbrook, favored giving the Afghans a guarantee of help should the Russians invade, he was overruled by London. London declared that in a recent 1873 Anglo-Russian agreement the Russians had delimited the northern frontiers of Afghanistan and had promised that the territories of the Amir were outside Russia's sphere of influence.¹³ The Amir, however, was unconvinced and remained fearful.

- In 1878, five years after the Amir's last approach to the British seeking a territorial guarantee, he unintentionally brought about the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-79) by his act of receiving, albeit reluctantly, a special Russian diplomatic mission to Kabul. The Russians had dispatched this mission in expectation of war breaking

out with Britain in Europe, believing it useful to seek a mutual assistance treaty with the Afghans to tie down the British in the subcontinent.¹⁴ Afraid that the Russian mission would lead to a resident Russian diplomatic presence in Kabul, the British tried to send a counterbalancing mission to Kabul; when the Amir delayed giving his assent, the British invaded. This prompted the Amir to accept the Russian offer of a defensive alliance, which turned out to be worthless. By that time war in Europe and Turkey had been averted by the Congress of Berlin and the Russians had no further wish to risk hostilities with the British in Asia. When the Amir appealed for Russian military help against the advancing British forces the Russian Governor-General of Turkestan, K. P. von Kaufman, demurred, citing the difficulty of transporting troops and materiel across the Hindu Kush. With no Russian troops to bolster the weak Afghan forces, the British force easily advanced into Afghanistan. By the Treaty of Gandamak (1879) the British gained two important concessions: the Viceroy of India henceforth would control Afghanistan's foreign affairs; and Afghanistan would cede certain border areas, including the Khyber Pass, to India.¹⁵

- Hardly had the ink dried on this treaty when Britain and Russia clashed diplomatically over further Russian seizures of Central Asian areas. In fact, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the British and Russians were in almost continuous regional confrontation as Tsarist Russia expanded and consolidated its control over areas bordering Afghanistan. Despite occasional military incursions into disputed areas claimed by Afghanistan, the Russians always were willing to give the British guarantees of nonintervention in Afghanistan, assurances which the British never fully believed. War between the two powers almost broke out over the 1885 Panjdeh crisis, when Afghan and Russian forces competed for a Central Asian oasis; and in 1889 Britain warned Russia that any Russian move toward Herat would be treated as a declaration of war.¹⁶ During this period many Russian statements were made, official and journalistic, urging Tsarist armies to move south to seize Herat and proceed to the Indian Ocean or attack India.¹⁷ In 1896, after persistent British pressure on the Russians, the boundary between Afghanistan and Russia was fixed, except for the precise line along the Amu Darya river itself. The river boundary was not finally settled until 1946 when, by Afghan-Soviet agreement, the midchannel became the border.

● After the 1896 comprehensive border settlement, St. Petersburg did not abandon its interest in Afghanistan, although Afghanistan's foreign affairs were controlled by the British. The Russians in 1900 requested the right to establish direct relations with the Afghan government to settle border and other problems. The British stalled on the request but the Russians pressed. Finally, after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, Britain and Russia began negotiations to demarcate the interests of the two rival powers in Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet. These talks led to the 1907 Convention of St. Petersburg, by which Russia agreed again that Afghanistan lay outside its sphere of influence. It would not send agents into the country and it would confer directly with Britain on all matters relating to Russian-Afghan relations. Britain in turn agreed not to occupy or annex any part of Afghanistan nor to interfere in the internal affairs of that country.¹⁸ When the Amir refused to give his assent to the treaty, on the grounds that he had not been consulted, the Russians and British agreed in 1908 to proceed on the assumption that the agreement was in force.¹⁹



Photo by author

The Kabul River at Sarobi

The 1907 St. Petersburg Convention seemingly laid to rest the specter of Russian political and territorial ambitions toward Afghanistan. The "Great Game" ostensibly was over. By mutual consent Afghanistan had emerged as a semi-independent buffer state with British influence dominant in foreign affairs.

However, in little more than a decade two developments would change the situation: a communist party would take power in Russia, and Afghanistan would win back its right to conduct its foreign relations.

THE "SOCIALIST KING," AMANULLAH KHAN (1919-1929)

In February 1919 the 20-year-old Amanullah Khan came to the throne in Kabul. Although he was to rule for only 10 years before fleeing to exile in Rome, his influence on both domestic and foreign policy was considerable. In the decades that followed his exile he was greatly admired by many Afghan intellectuals. After the 1978 communist coup both leftist President Hafizullah Amin and the succeeding Babrak Karmal considered him a hero. While Amanullah's well-meaning attempts at modernization—such as secularizing law and educating women—engendered much domestic opposition and led to his downfall, his actions on foreign relations were popular and lasting.

Barely two months after becoming king Amanullah boldly denounced his country's 1879 treaty obligation to follow British advice in conducting Afghanistan's foreign relations. Three weeks later, on 3 May 1919, a detachment of Afghan troops crossed the Indian border and occupied a village, thereby provoking war with a surprised and World War I-weary Great Britain. Although the Third Anglo-Afghan War (May-June 1919) lasted barely a month before Amanullah's army was defeated and he sued for peace, the king emerged from the peace conference table seemingly the victor. He had won back for his country from the British the right to conduct its foreign affairs.²⁰

Afghans could rightly claim that after a hiatus of 40 years their country again was truly independent.

London's concession turned out to be profoundly significant. Apart from returning to the Afghans control of their foreign relations, the treaty signaled the diminution and eventual withdrawal of British influence in the region. Starting, too, with the reign of Amanullah, the Soviet Union, as the heir to Tsarist Russia, began to supersede Britain as the preeminent foreign power affecting the destiny of Afghanistan.

AMANULLAH AND LENIN Noting that the goals of the Bolsheviks were pacifist and nonimperialistic, Afghan leaders initially viewed the Russian Revolution with enthusiasm. Before coming to power the Bolsheviks had announced "the right of all nations forming part of Russia to secede and form independent states."²¹ The Afghans hoped Russian Moslems would take advantage of their new political opportunities.²² In denouncing his country's 1879 treaty with Great Britain Amanullah had looked north for international support, apparently including a military alliance with Russia.²³ In a letter to Lenin, dated 21 April 1919, Amanullah proposed the establishment of diplomatic relations. Lenin replied in two communications; the second, dated in November of 1919, was the more interesting. Lenin wrote:

*The Workers and Peasants Government instructs its embassy in Afghanistan to engage in discussions with a view to the conclusion of trade and other friendly agreements . . . [and to pursue] together with Afghanistan the joint struggle against the most rapacious imperialistic government on earth—Great Britain. . . . The Afghan people wish to receive military aid against England from the Russian people. The Workers and Peasants Government is inclined to grant such assistance on the widest scale to the Afghan nation, and to repair the injustice done by the former government of the Russian Czars . . . by adjusting the Soviet-Afghan frontier so as to add to the territory of Afghanistan at the expense of Russia.*²⁴

The promises of military aid against Britain and adjustment of the Afghan-Russian frontier to Afghanistan's benefit proved illusory. By the time Lenin wrote his letter the Third Anglo-Afghan War was over. And because the largely Moslem border region of the USSR was in revolt and out of control, the writ of the Soviet government did not even reach the Amu Darya river.²⁵

Yet these Amanullah-Lenin exchanges did lead to a noteworthy agreement: the 1921 Afghan-Soviet Treaty. This treaty was the first international agreement the Soviets entered into after seizing power. Under its terms the Afghans were given trade rights with the Soviet Union and were promised a subsidy of one million gold or silver rubles a year along with other economic aid. In addition, the Soviets agreed to return to Afghanistan, subject to plebiscites, territories in the Panjdeh area ceded under duress by Afghanistan to Russia or Bukhara in the nineteenth century.²⁶

The Soviet-administered plebiscites were in favor of continued Soviet rule,²⁷ and no territorial adjustment ever was made to Afghanistan's benefit.

The provision for an annual Soviet subsidy (worth about \$500,000) is interesting. The British had initiated this practice of giving a subsidy after the end of the First Anglo-Afghan War (1842); by 1919 when they terminated the subsidy the annual amount had reached 160,000 pounds (roughly equivalent to \$708,800). The Soviets thus, in effect, picked up the British tab. Soviet generosity did not prove, however, all that reliable. Sometimes Amanullah received his grant in goods and sometimes, toward the end of his rule, in armaments. Soviet payments often were in arrears and apparently ceased altogether when Amanullah fled to Rome in 1929.²⁸

During Amanullah's reign the Soviets assumed a relatively large foreign presence in the country. In Kabul, in 1926, the Soviets were the largest foreign colony, with 120 persons.²⁹ Their relatively large presence was a reflection of the fact that the USSR had initiated an arms and economic aid program to Afghanistan; this program was the first such Soviet aid program to any foreign country. During the 1920s the Soviets gave Amanullah a gift of 11 military airplanes, plus Russian pilots and technicians to operate them. These airplanes helped Amanullah crush a local rebellion. Some of the first telephone lines were laid by the Soviets between several Afghan cities, a Soviet-manned telegraph office was established in Kabul, a textile plant was erected in Herat, a civil air link was established between Tashkent and Kabul, and Russian engineers started building the later highly strategic north-south highway across the Salang Pass.

Despite all this economic and military aid, and the initially favorable Afghan reaction to the Russian Revolution, the Soviet Union never succeeded in changing its generally unpopular image among



Photo by author

Village in Wardak province

the Afghans. By the mid-1920s most Afghans suspected the Soviets, like their Tsarist predecessors, of being fundamentally interested in annexing Afghan territory. In addition, the anti-religious policy of the Soviets, their formal takeover of the Khanate of Bukhara, and periodic Soviet military incursions into Afghanistan in 1929 and 1930 all contributed to a negative image of the Soviet Union among Afghans. These policies and actions more than offset the positive effects of Soviet aid.³⁰

THREE SOVIET MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

Amanullah was never a Soviet vassal. In fact he was angered by Soviet repression of Moslem rebels in Russia's Central Asia, which precipitated the flight of several-hundred-thousand refugees to Afghanistan. Amanullah, however, did get along reasonably well with the Soviets, who found him more than acceptable as a neighboring ruler. And when he was overthrown the Soviets tried to restore him to power. Soviet motives for doing so apparently were two: to

make the Afghan ruler obligated to the Soviet Union and thus expand Soviet influence in Afghanistan; and to suppress more effectively rebellious Central Asian Moslems in the *Uzbek*-speaking Soviet areas adjacent to Afghanistan, who were using Afghanistan as a safe haven.³¹

So in April 1929 the Soviets dispatched a small expeditionary force of 800 to 1,000 men across the border, mostly Russians disguised as Afghans, to try to win back Kabul for the king. Ostensibly led by the Afghan Ambassador to Moscow, Ghulam Nabi, the force in fact was commanded by the former Soviet military attache in Kabul, Colonel K. M. Primakoff. After crossing the Amu Darya river the small army defeated the ill-equipped opposing Afghan forces and captured the northern cities of Mazar-i-Sharif and Tashkurgan. The army then headed south toward Kabul but had only proceeded a short distance when the predominantly Soviet element was ordered by Moscow to withdraw to the Soviet Union. The last unit crossed back into the USSR in June 1929, about two months after the initial invasion.

What prompted the recall was widespread international indignation over the Soviet action, at a time when the Soviet government was seeking diplomatic recognition from many countries. Since the Soviet role in the expeditionary force had been revealed, Moscow feared that the expeditionary force's continued presence in Afghanistan would jeopardize its recognition-seeking efforts.³²

TWO OTHER INTERVENTIONS Four years earlier, in 1925, Soviet forces temporarily had occupied a small island, Urta Tagail, in the Amu Darya river. This island was seized on the grounds that since the main channel of the river had shifted to the south of the island, the island itself, which once belonged to Afghanistan, now rightfully belonged to the Soviet Union. The real reason for the intervention apparently was to prevent the island from being used by *Uzbek* rebels from the USSR to launch raids into the Soviet Union.³³

After Kabul protested the Soviet seizure of the island—Afghan public opinion was highly incensed—both sides agreed to submit the issue to a joint commission. This body subsequently awarded the island to Afghanistan. The peaceful settlement of this dispute and the Soviet Union's acceptance of the commission's decision facilitated

Afghanistan's willingness to sign the 1926 bilateral nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union.³⁴

In June 1930 the Soviets intervened a third time. This time an army detachment penetrated 13 miles into Afghanistan to deal with a Moslem rebel, Ibrahim Beg, who was fighting against Soviet rule and had taken refuge in Afghanistan.³⁵

Under Amanullah's successors through World War II the Soviets never again gained the somewhat favored position they had enjoyed under the so-called "Socialist King." By then, the initial Afghan enthusiasm that had greeted the Bolshevik revolution long since had evaporated. In the 1930s two successive Afghan kings viewed the atheistic and oppressive Soviet regime with aversion and distrust. By the mid-1930s all Soviet civilians and military technicians brought in by Amanullah had returned to the USSR, and were not replaced; the Afghan air force now was manned solely by Afghans. A Soviet proposal in 1936 to establish trade missions in several Afghan cities was rejected. Afghan-Soviet relations remained distant through World War II.

Trade, however, between the two countries grew steadily. The Soviet share of Afghanistan's foreign trade rose from 7 percent in 1924-25, to 17 percent in 1933-34, and to 24 percent by 1938-39.³⁶

PRE-WORLD WAR II SOVIET OBJECTIVES

In the 1920s and 1930s Afghanistan did not loom large in Moscow's deliberations. The Soviets were preoccupied at home in crushing domestic opposition, some of the most troublesome elements of which came from rebellious Moslems in Central Asia. Feeling threatened by enemies within and without, the Soviet Union saw as its main foreign policy objective the need to obtain diplomatic recognition and international pledges of noninterference. A second priority was ideological—to spread international communism through the mechanism of the Comintern. Afghanistan figured only tangentially in both policies.

Although the Great Game ostensibly was over, Moscow and London continued to be rivals in Afghanistan during the two decades between World War I and World War II, particularly in the 1920s. In Kabul the British and Soviet legations were the most important ones, and London did not hesitate to use its influence to thwart Soviet

designs in the region. In the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement of 1921 Britain extracted a Soviet pledge to refrain from "any form of hostile action against British interests . . . especially in India and in the Independent State of Afghanistan."³⁷

Later, Britain succeeded in exerting pressure on Kabul to prevent the Soviets from opening two consulates in eastern and central Afghanistan. Britain also may have been influential in effecting the closing of three established Soviet consulates in the north and west of the country. For both Great Britain and the Soviet Union, during the period between the two World Wars Afghanistan continued to serve as a buffer state between the USSR and India.³⁸

Nevertheless, the Soviets, disregarding their 1921 trade agreement with the British, used the Comintern organization to stimulate anti-British agitation in India. In 1924 the Comintern Executive Committee decided to open a propaganda center in Mazar-i-Sharif in northern Afghanistan, with India as the target. But it is doubtful that the office ever opened; certainly, the Comintern made little impact on Afghanistan.³⁹

Afghanistan itself was not then a fertile area for communism, despite the Soviet legation's efforts to spread propaganda. Little internal political discontent existed, and the many refugees from Soviet Central Asia harbored bitter memories of Soviet repression.

ANOTHER SOVIET INVASION PROPOSED

Although a second Afghan-Soviet nonaggression pact was signed in 1931, the Afghan government still feared the possibility of further Soviet incursions. Up to 1940 Afghanistan periodically asked the British government what it would do in the event of war between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan. British replies were evasive or noncommittal; but in 1939, London apparently took the threat seriously.⁴⁰

With the benefit of hindsight, the British and Afghans did have grounds for concern from an unexpected quarter—Nazi Germany.

After World War II, researchers studying Nazi archives discovered a proposal by Berlin to Moscow in 1939 or early 1940 that Amanullah be brought out of exile in Rome to serve as nominal leader of a Soviet-led invasion of Afghanistan. Labelled the Amanullah Plan, the proposal called for an invasion carried out by

disguised Soviet forces and German commandos, reminiscent of the abortive Soviet intervention of 1929. Though negotiations to carry out the plan began in Moscow, Hitler cancelled them. The Soviets, according to German records, in any case were not overly enthusiastic about returning Amanullah to power with German assistance.⁴¹

During World War II Afghanistan formally was neutral but did bow to a joint British-Soviet demand that all Germans and Italians be expelled. By 1939, the Germans had become the largest European community in Kabul. During the war years trade between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union virtually halted, probably because the Soviets were too busy with the war to engage in business transactions with a marginally useful trading partner like Afghanistan.⁴²

LORD CURZON, VICEROY OF INDIA, ONCE REMARKED that Afghanistan was a state that owed its existence to its geographic position. Its usefulness as a buffer probably saved it from absorption by Tsarist Russia or Great Britain. Certainly, Tsarist expansionism into Central Asia likely would have swallowed Afghanistan had not British power stopped the Tsarist advance at the Amyu Darya river. As for Great Britain, despite three victorious wars against Afghanistan, Britain did not annex the country to India, in large part because of the desirability of maintaining a buffer state against Tsarist Russia.

Despite Afghanistan's century-long history of wars and boundary grievances with Britain, Kabul remained generally more fearful of Moscow than of London. In the 1850s and 1870s, and then again in the 1930s, Kabul's rulers repeatedly turned to the British, seeking guarantees of help against feared Russian interventions. Only twice, in 1878 and 1919, did the Afghans turn to the Russians for military aid against Britain.

Britain's control for 40 years (1879-1919) of Afghanistan's external relations, and formidable power in the world, served as an effective counterbalance against Russia. When in 1947 the British withdrew from the subcontinent, and upset the balance of power, they left a political power vacuum in the Afghanistan region that ultimately the Soviets were able to exploit.

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In reviewing the record of Moscow's relations with Kabul, two small episodes particularly stand out—the abortive 1929 Soviet expeditionary force to restore Amanullah to the throne, and 10 years later the Nazi proposal to Moscow for a similar expedition to overthrow the Kabul government. One wonders whether in December of 1979 the Kremlin remembered both these episodes when it decided to invade Afghanistan again to install a government of Moscow's choice.

Growing Soviet Involvement, 1945-1979

Given the demise of British India, Russian occupation of Afghanistan was inevitable, and it is surprising that it took the Russians 32 years to achieve it.

Sir Olaf Caroe, scholar and Governor of Northwest Frontier Province (1946-47), July 1981

SOVIET INFLUENCE GROWS



URING THE 34-YEAR PERIOD FROM 1945 TO THE SOVIET invasion of late 1979 the USSR emerged as the most important foreign nation involved in Afghan affairs. Over those years Soviet penetration into Afghanistan's economy and military establishments was singularly successful. In trade, in economic and military aid, and even in political influence the USSR became preeminent among foreign countries involved in Afghanistan.

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

After Great Britain's withdrawal from the Indian subcontinent in 1947 no other state had the power or will to balance the growing influence of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The territory that had once been British India now was divided between Pakistan and India. These two countries had differing policies toward both Afghanistan and the Soviet Union; and, furthermore, each was antagonistic to the other. Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan, the country with which it has the longest border, were strained during most of the period. India, by contrast, enjoyed excellent relations with Afghanistan, but

India was separated from Afghanistan geographically and had neither the power nor the inclination to act as a counterweight to the Soviet Union.

As for Iran, relations with Afghanistan were never close. Although the two countries had cultural and linguistic affinities, trade between them was small and Afghans harbored a centuries-old distrust of Persian designs on their country. To help counter the growing position of the USSR in Afghanistan, the Shah of Iran, in 1974 and 1975, offered Afghanistan massive economic aid, as much as \$2 billion, mainly to build a railroad from Kabul to Bandar Abbas, Iran, on the Gulf. Little of this aid, however, was dispensed. A railroad was studied, but not built.¹

Only the United States, as a superpower, was left as a possible counterbalance to the Soviets in influence. Yet during this period, and especially during the crucial years of 1945-55, Washington had neither the vision nor the will to become a serious rival of the Soviets in Afghanistan. Not until 1942 had an American diplomatic presence been established in Kabul. Though that presence grew in size and importance, Afghanistan's remoteness and a series of inadequate American policies prevented the United States from playing the kind of forceful role that might have prevented the December 1979 Soviet takeover.

The key period with respect to American opportunity probably was the decade following World War II. Leon B. Poullada, American scholar and former diplomat, has argued forcefully that "during these years (1945-53) very modest American aid and generous understanding could have established an Afghan future inextricably linked to the West."² Instead, Poullada found that "indifference, ignorance, and Soviet appeasement" characterized American policy toward Afghanistan.³

During the period, little American economic aid was given and Afghanistan's repeated pleas for American arms assistance were rebuffed. In retrospect, one must agree that a great opportunity was ignored. By the end of the 1950s the Afghans increasingly were turning to the Soviets, who gained a military and economic foothold that in two decades they were able to exploit into positions of power and influence.

Emerging from World War II with an antiquated military force, Afghanistan's rulers were determined to modernize their armed services to be better able to suppress tribal revolts, to strengthen the central government's authority, and to possess something of a deterrent force against the Soviet Union. Afghan leaders made it clear to Washington and London that they considered the Soviet Union the country's principal external threat, and that Afghanistan did not want to become dependent on Soviet arms.⁴

Washington nevertheless rejected Afghan requests to become the country's arms supplier. As the Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy (1950-53) later wrote, "the State Department showed absolutely no interest in Afghanistan."⁵

Various reasons for this lack of interest were advanced by American policymakers. One reason was that Afghan threats to turn to the Soviets were perceived as not credible. Other reasons put forward were that "Afghanistan is of little or no strategic importance to the United States" and "overt Western-sponsored opposition to Communism [by a US-armed Afghanistan] might precipitate Soviet moves to take control of the country."⁶

A limited US offer of arms sales for cash in 1951, contingent on the doubtful prospect of Pakistan giving transit rights, proved unacceptable to the Afghans.⁷

Later, when Pakistan showed a willingness to join the alliances of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), and when Afghan-Pakistan relations grew strained over the Pushtunistan issue, Washington became even less interested in providing arms on concessionary terms for fear of worsening Afghan-Pakistan relations.

The one small concession Washington made to Kabul in the arms area was to offer US-financed staff training for limited numbers of Afghan military officers in the United States. The first Afghan officer went to the United States in 1958, 68 went in 1962 (at the height of the program), and in 1978, the last year of the program, 20 officers went.⁸ By the time the 20-year US program was terminated in 1978, Afghan officers had taken 487 courses in the United States (some Afghans took several courses). By comparison, the number of

Afghans going to the Soviet Union for military training during roughly the same period was 3,725.⁹

SOVIETS BECOME LEADING ARMS SUPPLIER

Only after repeated rebuffs from Washington in the late 1940s and early 1950s did Kabul accept Moscow's long-standing offer of military aid. And that decision proved politically momentous. The Soviet Union soon became Afghanistan's sole supplier of arms. And in 1978 a small group of leftist Afghan army and air force officers, many of whom had trained in the Soviet Union, seized power and helped create the political conditions that precipitated the Soviet intervention in December 1979.

A month after the last American turndown on military arms aid (in December 1954) the Afghans initiated negotiations with the Soviets on the Soviet offer to supply arms. Concurrently, the Afghans opened talks and reached quick agreement with the Czechs, in August 1955, to purchase \$3 million worth of Czech weapons; this agreement was the first major Afghan arms purchase since the purchase of British weapons during World War II.¹⁰

In July 1956 the Soviets agreed to a \$32 million concessionary loan for the purchase of Soviet weapons at cheap prices. Other Soviet arms agreements followed. And by 1978 the sum value of Soviet arms sold to Afghanistan totaled \$1,250 million.¹¹

By 1963 Soviet military instructors had completely replaced the long-standing contingent of Turkish officers (traditionally the military advisers to the Afghan army). Of the almost 4,000 Afghan military officers who went to the USSR for training, all were obliged to take one or more courses in communism.¹² Some stayed in the Soviet Union for several years in order first to learn Russian.

One effect of almost total Afghan dependence on Soviet logistical arms support, including spare parts, ammunition, and gasoline, was that Afghanistan implicitly could never act militarily against any foreign country without Moscow's approval.¹³ Another benefit to the Soviets of their enhanced and eventually pervasive presence in the Afghan military, with advisers occasionally assigned down to the company level, was the opportunity it gave the Soviets to recruit Afghans for intelligence purposes, and to recommend those Afghans who were most cooperative for career advancement and for training in the USSR. In addition, any Afghans who seemed impressed with

Soviet communism, or who were receptive to Soviet influence, were steered to the small but growing Afghan Communist Party, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).

When Western diplomats expressed concern to senior Afghan officials about the extent of Soviet penetration in the Afghan military, Afghan officials scoffed at the concern. They sometimes quoted an Afghan proverb: "When you ride a good horse, who cares in which country it was born."

SOVIET TRADE AND AID COME TO PREDOMINATE

Just as Moscow became the most important arms supplier to Afghanistan, so too Moscow gradually emerged as Afghanistan's principal trading partner and economic aid donor.

TRADE The USSR achieved its preeminent trading position in part by taking advantage of trade embargoes and disruptions that Pakistan imposed on Afghanistan between 1947 and 1955. Pakistan had taken these actions in retaliation for Afghanistan's political agitation for a new nation state, called Pushtunistan, to be carved out of the *Pushtu*-speaking border areas of Pakistan. Almost all non-Soviet trade with Afghanistan hitherto had passed through Pakistan via the port of Karachi. Shortly after the 1949 Pakistan trade embargo the Afghans signed a four-year barter agreement with the Soviets. Moscow agreed to provide petroleum products, cotton cloth, sugar, and other goods in exchange for Afghan wool, cotton, fruits, nuts, and furs. This trade agreement was renewed and expanded when it expired. Natural gas discovered in northern Afghanistan was exported to the USSR. With the discovery of this gas, the value of trade between the two countries grew significantly.

Existing trade statistics for 1950-78 are somewhat inconsistent; but they clearly show the USSR becoming Afghanistan's leading trading partner. According to the International Monetary Fund, the USSR in 1970 accounted for 30 percent of Afghanistan's foreign trade; by 1977, however, the USSR's share had dropped to 23 percent.¹⁴ Official Afghan statistics for the fiscal year ending March 1978 showed the Soviet share to be higher—42 percent of Afghan exports and 28 percent of imports.¹⁵

ECONOMIC AID Afghanistan was an especially favored beneficiary of Soviet economic aid. Not only was Afghanistan the first non-communist country anywhere to receive Soviet economic aid

before and after World War II, but by 1979 it ranked first among all non-communist countries in the total value of Soviet aid offered. Post-World War II Soviet aid to Afghanistan began in January 1954 with a \$4.5 million concessionary (3 percent) loan for the construction of grain elevators, a flour mill, and a bakery. This aid was followed in that same year by three other Soviet aid agreements worth \$8.2 million for two cement plants, a fruit cannery, and other items. In the next year, 1955, the Soviets donated a 100-bed hospital to Kabul and 15 buses; they also offered a \$100 million aid credit (at 2 percent interest) under which the Soviets built hydroelectric plants, the 1.7-mile-long Salang Pass highway tunnel, and the Bagram Air Base outside Kabul.¹⁶

Every few years thereafter more aid agreements were signed. A 1979 Soviet account made the following claim:

*Over the years the USSR has helped Afghanistan in some 120 industrial, agricultural and other projects of which about 70 have already been completed. . . . The USSR has aided Afghanistan in building about 70 percent of its hard-surface roads . . . and three of its four international airports.*¹⁷

By 1978 Soviet aid to the value of \$1.265 million had been given to Afghanistan. In addition, Eastern European countries, probably on Soviet pressure, had extended some \$110 million. Interest and repayment terms on Soviet loans were notably concessionary, more so apparently than Soviet loans to any other non-communist country during the period.¹⁸ Interest rates usually were between 2 and 3 percent and repayment periods were long, up to 30 years.

At the time of the 1978 leftist coup 650 Soviet aid technicians were working in Afghanistan.¹⁹ By 1979, some 5,000 Afghan students and civilian officials had received training in Soviet academic institutions and 1,600 in Soviet technical institutions, more than in any other country.²⁰

While in monetary terms Soviet trade and economic aid loomed large, many Afghans privately were critical of the quality of Soviet products, economic assistance, and training.²¹ The octane level of Soviet-supplied gasoline, for example, was lower than international standards, while the celebrated Salang Pass tunnel was always damp and suffered from a dearth of lamps. The Soviet-designed and

-advised state citrus and dairy farms in the Jalalabad area perennially operated at a large loss. The quality, too, of Soviet education was low; Afghan returnees from the USSR found their new skills compared unfavorably to the skills of those who received education in North America and Western Europe.²²

Not all Soviet projects were of low quality, however. The paved roads built by the Soviets were uniformly good, notably the 425-mile highway between Kandahar and Herat and on to the Afghan-Soviet border town of Torghundi. Some Westerners at the time suspected this was deliberate Soviet planning in the event of a future military intervention.

On balance, Afghans believed that Soviet trade and economic aid were beneficial, although most Afghans preferred goods made in the West and Japan. Afghanistan consequently made a conscious effort to diversify its trade and economic aid donors. Next to the Soviet Union, Japan was Afghanistan's largest trading partner in 1978.

HOW DID US ECONOMIC AID COMPARE TO THAT OF THE USSR? Up to 1978, when US aid was terminated, the United States had provided \$532.87 million in aid, of which \$378.17 million was in grants and the remaining \$154.7 million in concessionary loans.²³

This US aid represented 42 percent of the value of Soviet aid. A few American aid projects were quite visible—notably the Helmand Valley irrigation system and the 312-mile Kabul-to-Kandahar highway—but Afghan officials who were concerned about the large Soviet aid image complained in 1977 that too much American aid went to low-visibility projects with only long-term benefits. As for the quality and usefulness of US aid, assessments differed.²⁴ Still, despite charges that US aid was slow, burdened with red tape, and sometimes inappropriate (Kandahar airport, for example), Afghans welcomed it and believed it to be beneficial.

Besides the USSR and the United States, other aid donors during 1946-80 included the following: the World Bank-affiliated International Development Agency provided \$225 million; the Asian Development Bank, \$95 million; and the United Nations Development Program, \$74 million. Several NATO countries, the People's Republic of China, India, and some Eastern European countries also gave modest amounts of aid. However, none of these donors approached the importance of either the USSR or the United States.²⁵

SPECIAL POSITION OF THE SOVIETS

By 1978 Afghanistan's heavy dependence on Soviet trade and military and economic assistance enabled the Soviets to enjoy a degree of influence probably unmatched by them elsewhere among nonaligned non-communist Third World countries. A former senior official of the Ministry of Information and Culture, discussing Soviet influence during that period, said that "Afghans had a terrible fear of Russians."²⁶ Soviet demands in the cultural and informational fields almost always were granted, he recalled; the rationale was "it's unwise to fool with the Russians."²⁷

The growing influence and power of the Soviets were evident in other ways. Political relations ostensibly were governed by the Afghan-Soviet treaty of neutrality and nonaggression of 24 June 1931, a treaty that was renewed periodically until it was superseded by the 1978 treaty of friendship and cooperation. On international issues Afghanistan was careful to avoid antagonizing the Soviets, to the point that "Kabul's foreign policy was as close to Moscow's as that of any nonaligned country," one American scholar has concluded.²⁸

When President Daoud, near the end of his rule, attempted to reduce dependence on the Soviet Union by broadening the country's Islamic ties and patching up relations with Pakistan, it was too late. When it suited its purposes Moscow bullied Afghanistan on economic and military aid and on other issues. During Daoud's April 1977 visit to Moscow, both President Podgorny and Premier Brezhnev lectured him for allowing an increase in the number of NATO-country aid technicians in Afghanistan, leading to an angry exchange between Brezhnev and Daoud.²⁹

Reportedly, the Soviets once threatened to limit their military aid assistance when the Afghans considered giving a non-military-related contract to a French group rather than a Soviet group for exploitation of a copper deposit. A senior Ministry of Planning official also recalled that the Afghans did not want to accept a Soviet offer to build a low-quality fertilizer plant at Mazar-i-Sharif, but were browbeaten into accepting it.³⁰

Over a period of 20 years, Soviet pressure on the Afghans succeeded in getting the Afghans to agree to limit all foreign economic aid projects slated for the northern, Soviet-bordering provinces to just the Soviets. This pressure at first was limited to protesting the

presence of Americans on a United Nations oil exploration team.³¹ Later, the protest was applied to the presence of nationals of all NATO countries. Finally, the pressure evolved into a demand that the Afghans prohibit the working presence of any foreign aid experts in the northern region except the Soviets. When the US Agency for International Development (AID) proposed in 1977 to locate a small project in Baghlan province (on the northern side of the Hindu Kush Mountains but not bordering the USSR), the Soviets successfully stalled the project; they argued again that northern Afghanistan was their exclusive sphere of influence.³²

In addition to this geographical area-of-aid influence, the Soviets secured a virtual monopoly position in Afghan oil and mineral exploitation; even UN experts were excluded from access to Afghan geologic and topographic maps.³³

Another example of Soviet influence was Afghan acquiescence in principle in 1952 to the Soviet request that foreigners generally be prohibited from entering Afghan-Soviet border areas. How wide was this zone of exclusion is not clear, but it included all border towns. Foreign big-game hunters, seeking Marco Polo sheep trophies in the narrow mountainous Wakhan corridor, were asked by their official guides not to make photographs of the Soviet Union from along the border approach road into the hunting area. No comparable restrictions applied to Soviets traveling in the Pakistan or Iran border areas.

Perhaps most significant of all was President Daoud's hesitancy—in part in fear of Soviet displeasure—to remove many important leftist officers from the military and air force, or to purge known pro-Soviet Marxists from the police and civilian ministries. Also, while the American Embassy was requested about 1975 to refrain from contacts with political opposition elements, the Soviet Embassy continued with impunity to keep in close touch with members of the Marxist PDPA party.

SOVIET AND US OBJECTIVES IN THE POSTWAR DECADES

A Soviet historian, chronicling Afghan-Soviet relations up to the mid-1960s, described Soviet objectives as seeking to strengthen "Afghan independence" and "economic development."³⁴

In fact, Soviet objectives involved more than these two aims. And whether by the 1970s they included strengthening Afghan independence is arguable. The historical record suggests the Soviets had in fact four main objectives, as outlined below.

- One of these objectives was to ensure that Afghanistan did not become an unfriendly border state with close American ties, as was the case with Iran and Turkey. Khrushchev in his memoirs states:

At the time of our visit there [1955], it was clear to us that the Americans were penetrating Afghanistan with the obvious purpose of setting up a military base. . . . The capital which we've invested in Afghanistan hasn't been wasted. We have earned the Afghans' trust and friendship, and it hasn't fallen into the Americans' trap.³⁵

Khrushchev's statement suggests an exaggerated and paranoid Soviet concern about American intentions in Afghanistan. No evidence exists that the United States ever expected Afghanistan to become a pro-American, anti-Soviet state or that the United States contemplated establishing a military base in Afghanistan. In 1962 President John F. Kennedy explained to the visiting Afghan Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Prince Naim, that "the United States is a long way off and even though it is very anxious to help it can at best play a limited role."³⁶

American objectives toward Afghanistan were modest, well intentioned, and pragmatic. As approved in 1966, and applied with no appreciable change down to the 1978 Marxist coup, these objectives were as follows: to preserve Afghanistan's independence and territorial integrity; to create a viable Afghan political and economic system; to prevent Soviet influence from becoming so strong that Afghanistan would lose its freedom of action; and to improve Afghanistan's ties with Pakistan and Iran.³⁷

In 1971 the US embassy commented as follows:

For the United States, Afghanistan has at the present limited direct interest; it is not an access route for US trade with others; it is not presently as far as is known a source of oil or scarce strategic metals nor does it appear likely that it will become so; there are no treaty ties or defense commitments; and

*Afghanistan does not provide us with significant defense, intelligence, or scientific facilities.*³⁸

US diplomatic relations with a succession of Afghan governments were excellent. Nevertheless, the US Department of State decided in late 1977 to downgrade the American Embassy in Kabul to the category of mission usually accredited to countries of least importance to the United States. Over the vigorous objections of American Ambassador Theodore L. Eliot, Jr., the State Department changed the ranking of the embassy in Kabul—to begin in 1978 with the next Ambassador, Adolph Dubs—from Class 3 to Class 4. This was the lowest category of Embassy in the State Department's internal ranking system, which determines pay and perquisites of the Ambassador and, to some extent, the Ambassador's staff. Though the State Department emphasized that this action merely was part of a worldwide review of Embassy categories, many at the Kabul Embassy saw the change as indicative of the little importance Foggy Bottom gave to Afghanistan.

- A second Soviet objective seemingly was to draw Afghanistan into a dependent relationship vulnerable and responsive to Soviet pressure. As already described, the Soviets were successful in this move. By 1978 they were able to wield more influence, heavy handed though it often was, than any other foreign country.

- A third Soviet objective was economic—to gain economic advantages from aid projects and from trade. In the years before the December 1979 Soviet invasion the most striking trade benefit the Soviets reaped was their access to Afghan natural gas, sold to them at prices below international levels.

- A fourth Soviet objective undoubtedly was to nourish the small pro-Soviet Afghan Communist Party, called the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), though it was split for a decade after 1967 into two parties. This objective was consonant with the long-standing Soviet aim of spreading pro-Soviet international communism. In Afghanistan Soviet monetary aid to the party was given discreetly so as not openly to annoy the government in power.

AFGHANISTAN PAYS NO HEED TO WARNINGS ABOUT SOVIET INTENTIONS AND SUBVERSION

In 1956 and several times thereafter down to 1977 American diplomats in Kabul warned Afghan leaders about the risks of Soviet

economic and military penetration. The Americans pointed out that the Soviet economic aid program was laying a logistical infrastructure for a possible Soviet invasion, and that the large program of training Afghan military personnel in the USSR facilitated subversion. These warnings were disregarded; so was President Kennedy's admonition in September 1962 to the visiting Prince Naim, that "Afghanistan could not long exist in a position of growing dependency on the USSR."³⁹

The prevailing Afghan attitude to these warnings was well described by a one-time American educator in Kabul, as follows:

*Afghanistan was quite sure that Soviet actions were always motivated by their own interests and by those alone. But, [the Afghans] reasoned . . . those interests could only be injured by an attack on Afghanistan. The country would be an economic liability to the USSR; to control it would be difficult and costly; and, most important, any such aggression would have disastrous repercussions among the neutralist nations in Asia and Africa.*⁴⁰

THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN (THE AFGHAN COMMUNIST PARTY)

The communist movement came late to Afghanistan. Though an "Afghan" representative attended an Eastern Communist Central Committee meeting in Berlin in 1919 and two "Afghans" attended a 1920 Congress of the Comintern in Baku, their names apparently were unknown in Afghanistan. And they may not have been Afghans at all.⁴¹

In the 1920s and 1930s individual Afghan socialists visited the USSR, but had no impact in Afghanistan. For all intents the Afghan communist movement began in January 1965 with the establishment of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan at a meeting in Kabul allegedly attended by 30 persons.

When it seized power in the Marxist coup of 27 April 1978 the PDPA was a small semi-clandestine party, mainly urban based, and predominantly middle class. It drew membership from teachers,

university students, civil servants, and military officers—not from workers or peasants. In 1967, two years after its founding, the party split into two factions; but it was reunited in 1977 as a result of Soviet pressure. The two reunited factions, *Khalq* (masses) and *Parcham* (banner), distrusted and disliked each other and retained their separate organizations.⁴²

At the time of the coup the PDPA claimed 50,000 members (out of a population of 15 million), but this figure was exaggerated. The larger faction, the *Khalq*, had perhaps 2,500 members and the *Parcham* between 1,000 and 1,500, for a total of 3,500 to 4,000, less than 10 percent of the claimed figure.⁴³ In 1979, a *Khalq* leader, Hafizullah Amin, claimed the party had 15,000 members.⁴⁴ If sympathizers are included, this may have been a realistic number.

Ideologically, the two factions differed little, especially in their pro-Soviet view of international relations. In membership, the Parchamis were smaller, predominantly *Dari* (Persian) speakers, non-Pushtun, almost entirely located in Kabul, more urbane, and better educated. They have been described as Afghanistan's "communist aristocracy."⁴⁵

The Khalqis, by contrast, had about twice as many members, were predominantly Pushtun (*Pushtu* speakers), often came from the economically and socially deprived classes, and were less well educated than the Parchamis. Though their membership mostly was located in Kabul, the Khalqis had a greater provincial presence than the Parchamis. The 1967 party split occurred not over policy differences but because of personality and ethnic differences and power-struggle rivalries.⁴⁶

The PDPA had three principal leaders (see below) at the time of the April 1978 coup; each became in succession Afghan President.

- The first was **Nur Mohammad Taraki**, founder of the PDPA and leader of the *Khalq* faction. He was President for 17 months, from 28 April 1978 until 14 September 1979, when he was deposed and executed by his *Khalq*-faction colleague, then Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin.

- **Hafizullah Amin** in turn lasted as President a bare 100 days before he himself was killed on 28 December 1979 by Soviet soldiers.

● The third leader was **Babrak Karmal**, leader of the *Parcham* faction and a long-time KGB agent.⁴⁷ Babrak had been forced into exile by Taraki and Amin in July 1978 but was brought back by the Soviets to become President after their intervention.

No evidence exists that the Soviets were directly responsible for the establishment of the PDPA in 1965, although the Soviet Union obviously was the inspiration and model. What is likely is that the Soviet Embassy in Kabul gave encouragement and advice to PDPA leaders about the formation and development of the party. Taraki and Babrak were frequent visitors and contacts of the Soviet Embassy from the late 1950s on.

The pro Soviet orientation of the PDPA (especially of the *Parcham* faction) was integral to the party from its inception. The secret party constitution, adopted in the party's first year, 1965, called for "expanding and strengthening Afghan-Soviet friendly relations."⁴⁸ A 1976 party history stated:

*[The Party] struggles against imperialism, and particularly American imperialism and its open ally, Maoism, and is fighting alongside our brother parties, foremost among them the Leninist party of the Soviet Union.*⁴⁹

Even though Hafizullah Amin's relations with the Soviets soured during the summer and autumn of 1979 and led to his death by the Soviets, he never repudiated the affinity of his party and government for the Soviet Union.

Curiously, PDPA members engaged in little party-related international travel before the April 1978 coup. PDPA members were not listed among attendees at international communist meetings, leading some foreign observers immediately after the 1978 coup to question whether the party really was communist at all. Taraki did spend 42 days in the Soviet Union in 1965, ostensibly for medical treatment, and several unidentified PDPA members visited New Delhi in the 1970s for consultation with the Communist Party of India.⁵⁰ But beyond these known trips PDPA members seemingly did not engage in party-related international travel between the founding of the party in 1965 and the 1978 Marxist coup.

Study or experience abroad, however, was significant in the communist indoctrination and recruitment of certain party members.



HAFIZULLAH AMIN
Leader of the PDPA's *Khalq* faction; the country's Prime Minister, and President from September to December 1979.



NUR MOHAMMAD TARAKI
Founder of the PDPA and Afghan President from April 1978 until deposed and executed by Amin in September 1979.

Before the party's founding, Taraki had spent a few years working and studying (in night school) in Bombay. He met members of the Communist Party of India there and became converted to communism.⁵¹

During Hafizullah Amin's studies at Columbia University Teachers College and at the University of Wisconsin (summer school) he reportedly reinforced his existing leftist beliefs. Of the more than 10,000 Afghans who received academic or military training in the USSR before the coup, perhaps 5 percent became indoctrinated. All Afghan students and trainees were subject to compulsory study of Marxism and the international communist movement. Some were recruited as agents for the Soviet intelligence services, and some rose to high positions in the party.⁵²

The fact that the PDPA was not internationally recognized as a communist party was due largely to the party's deliberate effort to

hide its true colors. The Soviets probably supported this duplicity. Before and after the 1978 coup, including the first five years of Soviet occupation, the PDPA eschewed calling itself communist, preferring instead the term "national democratic." Yet its internal documentation made clear its Marxist orientation. A pamphlet printed in Kabul in 1978, *A Short Information about the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan*, described the party as the "vanguard of the working class" and "Comrade Taraki" as an "experienced Marxist-Leninist" who had worked to spread "Marxism-Leninism" about the country.⁵³

Soviet ties with the PDPA before the Soviet intervention were extensive. A former Afghan Minister of Interior recalled examining Afghan secret police dossiers that proved without a doubt that PDPA leaders were "controlled, subsidized, paid, and ordered directly by KGB elements of the Soviet embassy."⁵⁴

In 1982 a former Soviet KGB major, Vladimir Kuzichkin, who defected in London, reported that Babrak Karmal had been a "KGB agent for many years. He could be relied upon to accept our advice."⁵⁵

Though the PDPA had been beset by bitter factionalism almost from its inception, and had a small membership (less than half of 1 percent of the population), it was able to seize political power a scant 13 years after its establishment. The party's remarkable success was due to several factors. One was the faltering development of democratic political institutions in Afghanistan. Another was suppression, during President Mohammad Daoud's strong-man rule (1973-78), of moderate and right-wing political parties, while at the same time tolerating the existence (in part because of Soviet pressure) of the Marxist PDPA as a semi-legal party. Taking advantage of its tolerated status, the PDPA grew in importance as the only publicly perceived opposition group. The failure of five moderate or rightist coup attempts against Daoud only served to weaken further the non-communist opposition, leaving the field to the Marxists. Where in the 1960s rightist Moslem student organizations regularly reacted to leftist demonstrations with counter-demonstrations, by 1978 no rightist or centrist party or organization effectively existed in the country. The large 11,000-to-15,000 person leftist funeral procession in Kabul on 19 April 1978, which led to the leftist coup, produced no non-governmental political counterreaction.

During the last years of the monarchy (1965-73), and throughout the 1973-78 Daoud presidency, both factions of the PDPA had relative freedom to recruit and, within limits (no publications or demonstrations legally were permitted), to operate.⁵⁶

They used this freedom to recruit vigorously military officers, teachers, police, civil servants, and students. Some 600 military officers (out of 8,000—9,000 officers) became PDPA members.⁵⁷ A senior Ministry of Education official recalled that in the late 1960s the Teacher Training College in Jalalabad was riddled with communists (23 out of the 60 faculty and staff members).⁵⁸

At Kabul University in the 1960s and 1970s, though communists were a minority among the students, leftist followers of various stripes and Marxist influence nonetheless were significant. An Afghan university student of Turkoman ethnic origin recalled that of the 10 ethnic Turkoman students at the university in April 1978 eight were Marxists of one stripe or another. Most labeled themselves as adherents to the *Khalq*, *Parcham*, or splinter *Shola Javaid* communist factions.⁵⁹

For many young military officers of Pushtun background, affiliation with the *Khalq* faction was synonymous with Pushtun nationalism.⁶⁰ Many became disillusioned with President Daoud after 1974 because of his failure to carry out promised reforms.⁶¹

When Daoud seized power in 1973 he acknowledged his debt to the supporting *Parcham* faction by appointing some *Parcham* members to his Revolutionary Council and others to his Cabinet as Ministers. Some 160 leftists, most of them Parchamis, were given government appointments in the provinces.⁶² By the end of 1975, however, in an effort to reduce communist influence in the government, Daoud removed many of his leftist appointees; this decision triggered a PDPA decision to remove him.

Many communists remained in government, however, and no legal stigma was attached to being one. "They were everywhere," recalled a senior Ministry of Education official.⁶³ The last Governor of Herat province before the 1978 coup, G. A. Ayeen, recalled that at the time of the coup both the Herat provincial police chief and the provincial education chief were communists, as also were an estimated 10 percent of the province's teachers.⁶⁴ A Ministry of Water and Power official estimated that communists made up 10 percent of

his Ministry.⁶⁵ A former senior official in the Ministry of Planning put the proportion of communists in his Ministry as at least 5 percent; many were "closet" communists who did not disclose their PDPA affiliation until after the 1978 coup.⁶⁶

Some senior PDPA leaders managed to earn government salaries without doing any work. One of these leaders was Dastagir Panjsheri, who between 1973 and 1978 came to the Ministry of Information and Culture only to pick up his pay check. When this flagrant absenteeism was protested internally within the Ministry, word came down from the Minister's office: "don't push the communists."⁶⁷

The fact that the communists were not fully purged from government, nor was the PDPA suppressed by Daoud until it was too late, was due to his confidence in being able to control them, to his fear of incurring Soviet displeasure, and perhaps to a lingering feeling of indebtedness for *Parcham* support in 1973.

As to the popularity of the communists among the public at large during the decade up to the 1978 coup, Afghan emigres have advanced varying opinions. Had a free election been held just before the 1978 coup, most believed the communists would have done little or no better than their weak showing in the two free elections of the 1960s; one Afghan emigre, however, believed that they would have won a majority of seats because, by the end of the Daoud period, they alone had become identified with economic and social reform.⁶⁸

Another reason for the party's success was Daoud's fragile hold over the country; by 1978 he commanded little government loyalty and no public enthusiasm. His power base was limited to the palace guard and to some in his Muhammadzai clan. Many Afghans had become disappointed and impatient with Daoud and charged the regime as a "do-nothing" government.⁶⁹ When the 1978 leftist coup came, few Afghans rallied to Daoud's support.

Relations, too, with the Soviet Union, which a Soviet KGB defector described as "never very good" under Daoud,⁷⁰ perceptibly cooled between 1975 and 1978. Daoud had distanced himself from *Parcham*-faction support, had purged some leftist officers from the army and the Foreign Ministry, and had tried to improve relations with Pakistan, Iran, Yugoslavia, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. When the Soviets likely learned from their informers in early 1978 that Afghan Foreign Minister Wahid Abdullah actively was urging other nonaligned countries to curb Cuba's influence in the Nonaligned

Movement (Cuba's Fidel Castro was chairman then),⁷¹ Moscow must have become alarmed and decided Daoud's continuation in office was no longer in the Soviet interest.

THE COMMUNISTS COME TO POWER

The military coup of 27 April 1978 had not been planned for that month. If we can believe the account given a year later by President Taraki, the coup had been planned for August but had been hastily advanced. It was precipitated when the Daoud government began to round up PDPA leaders following the large leftist funeral march in Kabul protesting the murder of PDPA leader Mir Akbar Khyber.⁷²

In any case the coup proved easy to carry out. Most of the action took place in Kabul, primarily at the Presidential Palace, and involved only some 600 rebel army men, 50 tanks, and two warplanes.

The palace guards and units of the 7th Division on the outskirts of Kabul resisted, but little opposition came from other army units stationed about or outside Kabul. Only in Jalalabad did the army resist, and that resistance lasted only two days.⁷³

Casualties were low. President Daoud and 30 family members and relatives were executed. Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin later claimed that 101 persons were killed, but others claimed the figure was 2,000 to 3,000.⁷⁴

Assuming that the figure of 600 rebel combatants is approximately correct, this figure means that a tiny fraction of the 15 million population, a mere four-tenths of 1 percent, managed to overthrow the government. It was a classic example of how, in a less developed country with no established democratic government tradition, a small group could seize the reins of government.

THE SOVIETS QUICKLY SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT

Immediate Soviet diplomatic recognition of the new government followed the 27 April 1978 coup. When the pro-Soviet orientation of the new government—now called the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA)—soon became evident to the public, speculation among Afghans and foreign observers arose whether the Soviets had masterminded the coup. The evidence of Vladimir Kuzichkin, a former KGB officer who was handling Afghanistan affairs at the time of the coup, points to a partial but critically important Soviet

role. He reported that when the Daoud government began arresting PDPA leaders following the 19 April 1978 funeral demonstration, key Afghan communists managed to consult the Soviet Embassy. As a result, said the former KGB officer, "Moscow quickly confirmed that we would support their proposed coup against Daoud."⁷⁵

Quick Soviet recognition of the DRA was followed by massive economic and military aid from the Soviets. In May 1978 the new leftist government announced that 30 new Soviet economic aid projects had been agreed on (most of them were discussed during the Daoud regime but not implemented). In July a secret \$250 million military aid agreement was concluded.⁷⁶

A year later, on 18 August 1979, the Soviets announced a 10-year moratorium on Afghan debt repayments. Other secret agreements also probably were concluded, including budgetary support to the regime. By the end of December 1979, when the Soviets invaded the country, 3,500 to 4,000 Soviet military advisers and technicians were attached to the Afghan military services. And 1,500 to 3,500 Soviet civilians (up from 650 before the coup) were working in various Afghan ministries.⁷⁷

The Soviet presence was so extensive that in some ministries the approval of Soviet advisers allegedly was necessary before major decisions could be made. A Soviet career diplomat, Vasily S. Safronchuk, who was the third-ranking official in the Soviet Embassy, was given an office in the Foreign Ministry. By the end of 1979 some 4,500 Afghan students were studying in the USSR and Eastern Europe.⁷⁸

THE KHALQ FACTION PURGES THE PARCHAM FACTION

The Soviets found, however, that they could not control the new leftist Afghan leadership. Most importantly, the Soviets were unable to prevent the purging of the *Parcham* faction by members of the *Khalq* faction. The reunification of the party, brought about by Soviet pressure in July 1977, only nine months before the coup, disintegrated six weeks after the coup. The *Khalqis*, with their larger party membership and greater strength in the armed forces, moved in early June 1978 to purge *Parcham*-faction members. By mid-June Babrak Karmal, First Deputy Prime Minister and the *Parcham* faction leader, was under house arrest. A month later he and four other *Parchamis*

were removed from the Cabinet and politically "exiled" as ambassadors abroad. Their status as envoys, including that of Nur Ahmad Nur, who was sent to head the Afghan Embassy in Washington though he scarcely knew English, lasted no more than two months. In September 1978 the five exiled *Parcham* leaders were accused of plotting to overthrow the Khalqi-dominated government and ordered home. Instead, after stripping their embassies of funds, they all absconded to Eastern Europe. There they enjoyed protection and material support from their host governments until the Soviets brought them back to Afghanistan 15 months later to rule the country. According to Soviet sources 2,000 *Parcham* faction members were imprisoned and close to 500 were executed by the Khalqis before the Soviet intervention.



BABRAK KARMAL
Leader of PDPA's *Parcham* faction; President of the DRA after the Soviet intervention in December 1979.

After the June-July 1978 purge of the *Parcham* faction, two Khalqi figures dominated the government: **Nur Mohammad Taraki**, originally President and Prime Minister; and **Hafizullah Amin**, originally Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. Amin, who personally had triggered the coup, soon emerged as the regime's strongman. By March 1979, 11 months after the coup, Amin had so increased his political power that he compelled Taraki to hand over to him the Prime Minister's portfolio. Six months later, on 16 September 1979, after Taraki unsuccessfully tried to have Amin assassinated, Amin deposed Taraki; and on 6 October Amin had Taraki secretly murdered. Amin himself lasted only another two-and-a-half months before he was deliberately killed by a Soviet death squad in

the December 1979 Soviet invasion and was replaced by **Babrak Karmal**.

REASONS FOR THE SOVIET INVASION

Much speculation has existed as to why the Soviets intervened.⁷⁹ The main impelling factors probably were the two discussed below:

(1) Moscow feared that the Marxist government in Kabul was collapsing, which if it occurred would threaten Soviet prestige and its newly enhanced strategic foothold in a border state.

(2) Were President Amin to manage to remain in power (by obtaining non-Soviet support), his mounting distrust of the Kremlin would lead to a diminished Soviet influence. Moscow also must have calculated that it could intervene without too much international cost.

Other lesser considerations also undoubtedly factored into the decision.

THREATENED COLLAPSE OF THE KABUL REGIME The Soviets probably were correct in believing that if they had not intervened the Amin government would have disintegrated. Chaotic government administration, excessive secret police brutality, unpopular domestic measures, and a deteriorating economy had alienated the public and discredited the leftist government. Public perception, too, that the regime was atheistic and anti-Islamic and excessively close to the Soviets also added to the government's unpopularity.

Despite massive Soviet military assistance—including new tanks, helicopters, and fighter planes—and the presence of perhaps 4,000 Soviet military advisers, the government was, by the summer of 1979, losing control of the countryside. This loss occurred despite the fact that Soviet advisers sometimes assumed command responsibilities down to the company level; Soviet pilots also often flew the Afghan air force's helicopter gunships and jet fighters.

In late May 1978, less than a month after the coup, the first opposition organization announced itself, in Peshawar, Pakistan. Five months later, in October 1978, the first anti-government revolt broke out in the countryside in eastern Kunar province, to be followed by similar uprisings in northern Badakhshan province. These revolts were followed in the ensuing months by local attacks on army units

and by scattered assassinations of PDPA members and government officials.

This insurgent activity, however, proved only a prelude to more serious revolts. In mid-March 1979, less than a year after the coup, Herat, the major city in west Afghanistan, was the scene of a large uprising that led to the deaths of 3,000 to 5,000 Afghans and at least 20 Soviet advisers and their families before it was crushed. In April and May Afghan army units rebelled in the eastern city of Jalalabad; in June and August some army units mutinied in Kabul. All these mutinies again were crushed.

Yet, in the countryside small but widespread anti-government incidents increased. In early December 1979 a local resistance force captured Feyzabad, the Badakhshan provincial capital; and only after Soviet air units and Soviet officers led the relieving government forces was the town recaptured.

Two American news correspondents estimated the number of rebel-troubled provinces at respectively 10 and 23 in April 1979.⁸⁰ A Soviet writer later stated that by the end of 1979 armed insurgency had broken out in 18 of the country's 29 provinces.⁸¹ The trend of these uprisings and insurgent incidents, together with mounting desertions from the armed forces, pointed to loss of control over the countryside.

To Moscow the specter of collapse of a pro-Soviet communist government in a country bordering the Soviet Union was anathema. A Soviet official, justifying the Soviet intervention, explained:

*The Afghan State was on the verge of disintegration. . . . To leave the Afghan revolution without internationalist help and support would mean to condemn it to inevitable destruction and to permit an access to hostile imperialist forces to the Soviet border.*⁸²

For reasons of Soviet security and ideology, and as a warning to other Soviet-aligned border states, the Soviets decided that the regime could not be allowed to collapse. No doubt they feared that any successor government would be cool, if not hostile, to the USSR. By 1979 most of the organized opposition to the leftist Afghan government (based in Peshawar, Pakistan) clearly came from anti-Soviet fundamentalist Moslems. In addition the Soviets probably feared that a successor Afghan regime would be pro-West, perhaps even

allowing the Americans a special position in the country. *Izvestia* in April 1980 explained:

*We had either to bring in troops or let the Afghan revolution be defeated and the country turned into a kind of Shah's Iran. . . . We knew that the victory of counter-revolution would pave the way for massive American military presence in a country which borders on the Soviet Union and that was a challenge to our country's security.*⁸³

The factors of ideology and precedent were important, too.⁸⁴ The Soviet justification for the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, known as the Brezhnev Doctrine, turned out to be applicable to Afghanistan. Brezhnev had stated after the Czech invasion:

*When external and internal forces hostile to socialism try to turn the development of a given socialist country in the direction of restoration of the capitalist system, when a threat arises to the cause of socialism in any country—a threat to the security of the socialist commonwealth as a whole—this is no longer merely a problem for that country's people, but a common problem, the concern of all socialist parties.*⁸⁵

This doctrine was interpreted by many observers in the West as meaning that once a country near the Soviet Union turned communist (and especially if it had a pro-Soviet orientation), the Soviets would take any action, including military invasion, to keep it that way. Many governments in the West initially had presumed that the Brezhnev Doctrine applied only to the Eastern European satellites. But Afghanistan showed that the Kremlin was prepared to apply it elsewhere as well. A Soviet writer reiterated: "to leave the Afghan revolution in the lurch, prey to the counter-revolution, would be to ignore our internationalist duty as communists."⁸⁶

The matter of example or precedent was important too. The Soviet Ambassador to France, Stepan Chevonenko, warned in a speech in Paris in April 1980 that after Afghanistan, the USSR would "not permit" another Chile.⁸⁷ During a discussion in Kabul in 1979 the East German Ambassador, Hermann Schweisau, told the author of this study that if the Soviet Union allowed a pro-Soviet communist government in a border state to collapse, it could have an unsettling effect on other border states within the Soviet orbit.

Other related factors also probably figured in the Soviet decision. One of these factors was a desire to display to the world Soviet power—to show that the USSR was a country to be reckoned with. Stated *Izvestia*: “we would have ceased to be a great power if we refrained from taking unpopular but necessary decisions . . . prompted by extraordinary circumstances. . . .”⁸⁸ According to a Moscow-based source, the Kremlin was frustrated and angered by American policies at the time and deemed it “necessary to show that the Soviet Union was still capable of defending its interests.”⁸⁹

SOVIET DISTRUST OF AMIN Another consideration must have been Soviet dislike and mistrust of Khalqi leader Hafizullah Amin. This mistrust probably began soon after the coup, with the Taraki- and Amin-led purge of the Parchamis, the more pro-Soviet of the two factions. Disapproval of Amin must have increased as his brutal and inept policies alienated the Afghan public and brought discredit to the Soviet-backed government. Amin's Tito-like proclivities and his manifest intention by the fall of 1979 to reduce his dependence on the USSR must have been the last straw, leading to a Soviet decision to replace him—by assassination preferably or by military force, if necessary. The problem was how to remove him, and at the same time preserve the pro-Soviet communist orientation of the government.

The decision to invade militarily likely was taken only after the Soviets bungled three attempts between 14 September and 17 December 1979 to eliminate Amin by assassination.⁹⁰

The first attempt was the so-called palace shoot-out in mid-September between then-President Taraki and Prime Minister Amin. The Soviet Ambassador, Aleksander M. Puzanov, persuaded Amin by a promise of safe conduct to visit Taraki, from whom he had become estranged. At the Presidential Palace Taraki's bodyguards attempted, unsuccessfully, to shoot Amin. This incident led instead to the overthrow of Taraki and the expulsion of the Soviet ambassador. Another attempt, also unsuccessful, was a KGB-inspired effort to poison Amin.⁹¹

The third assassination attempt, probably also Soviet-instigated, occurred in early December; in the shooting attempt, Amin was only slightly wounded, but his nephew, Assadullah Amin, then chief of the secret police, was seriously wounded. From the September palace

shoot-out onward, Amin, dependent though he was on Soviet economic and military support, clearly showed that he mistrusted Moscow. And that mistrust was mutual.

The fact that Amin twice had studied in the United States for a total of more than three years, 1957-58 and 1963-65, under American government auspices, made him suspect in Soviet KGB eyes.⁹² After Amin's death the Soviets and Babrak Karmal quickly charged that Amin was a CIA agent.

In fact, Amin never enjoyed good relations with the US Government during his time in power. Despite having studied in the United States under US Government auspices, Amin did not harbor pro-American feelings. This attitude may have been due to his leftist political views, and perhaps because he failed his doctoral examinations at Columbia University. First as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, then as Prime Minister, and finally as President, Amin made little effort to win the support or trust of the United States.

When US Ambassador Adolph Dubs was seized on 14 February 1979 by several Afghan splinter Marxist terrorists and held hostage against the release of some leftist opposition political prisoners, Amin bungled his handling of the event, ignoring US pleas for time and for parleying with the terrorists. Dubs' subsequent death that same day—either at the hands of his terrorist captors or by the storming DRA police force—and Amin's inept handling of the subsequent US Government request for an examination into the incident further soured the US attitude toward the Amin government.⁹³ These events led to a sharp cutback in the US presence in Afghanistan and hastened the termination of US aid programs (AID and Peace Corps) in the country.

After deposing Taraki in September 1979 Amin made himself President. When he later turned to the Pakistanis for support, and to an extent tried to improve relations with the Americans, the Soviets must have become truly alarmed.⁹⁴

SOVIETS ANTICIPATE MANAGEABLE LEVELS OF INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM A last major factor accounting for the invasion undoubtedly was a calculation that it could be managed without too much international cost. Though the American Government had publicized the steady Soviet troop build-up on Afghanistan's border, beginning in the summer of 1979, the Soviets correctly concluded

that American warnings were more bark than bite. Bitter memories of Vietnam were still fresh in the minds of the American public. In November 1979, a month before the Soviet invasion, the Khomeini government in Iran had taken the American Embassy staff in Tehran hostage without incurring any major American military reaction. As for the rest of the world, the Soviets correctly concluded that no really damaging sanctions against the USSR would occur.

The Soviets probably recalled too that only a year and a half earlier they had played an important role in a successful military intervention in another West Asian country, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen), without much international reaction. In June 1978, after Soviet planes had flown 5,000 Cuban troops into Aden, Cuban-trained South Yemeni militia with Cuban military support attacked Yemeni President Salim Rubayya Ali's palace in Aden. Soviet naval ships in the harbor and Cuban-piloted aircraft fired on the palace and the Defense Ministry building. Charged with questioning the "correctness of our relations with the socialist community, first of all with the Soviet Union," Ali was captured, and executed. A sycophantic pro-Soviet communist leader, Abd al-Fattah Isma'il, was installed in his place. From their South Yemen experience the Soviets may have concluded that establishing a client state by military force was easy.⁹⁵

In addition to the major considerations discussed above, other less-important factors weighed in favor of the Afghan invasion. Brezhnev later was quick to disclaim "absolutely false are the allegations that the Soviet Union has some expansionist plans in respect of Pakistan, Iran, or other countries of that area. . . . We are not coveting the lands or wealth of others."⁹⁶

But the fact remained that the Soviets now occupied a huge salient of territory 400 miles from the Arabian Sea. This strategic advantage could not have escaped Soviet planners. Also, once Afghanistan was pacified and became a compliant satellite, the Soviets probably calculated that they could exert enormous political and military leverage on nations in the region.

THE SOVIETS INVADE

Just as the communist coup of April 1978 proved easy to bring off, so too was the initial act of Soviet occupation. At the time of the invasion on 24 December 1979 only three Soviet military units were

in the country: a 2,500-man detachment helping guard Bagram Air Base north of Kabul; a 600-man armored unit guarding the Salang Pass tunnel; and a small unit of the army at Kabul airport. In addition, some 3,500 to 4,000 Soviet military advisers and technicians were scattered about the country. Babrak Karmal later claimed that 15,000 Soviet soldiers were in the country before Hafizullah Amin's downfall.⁹⁷

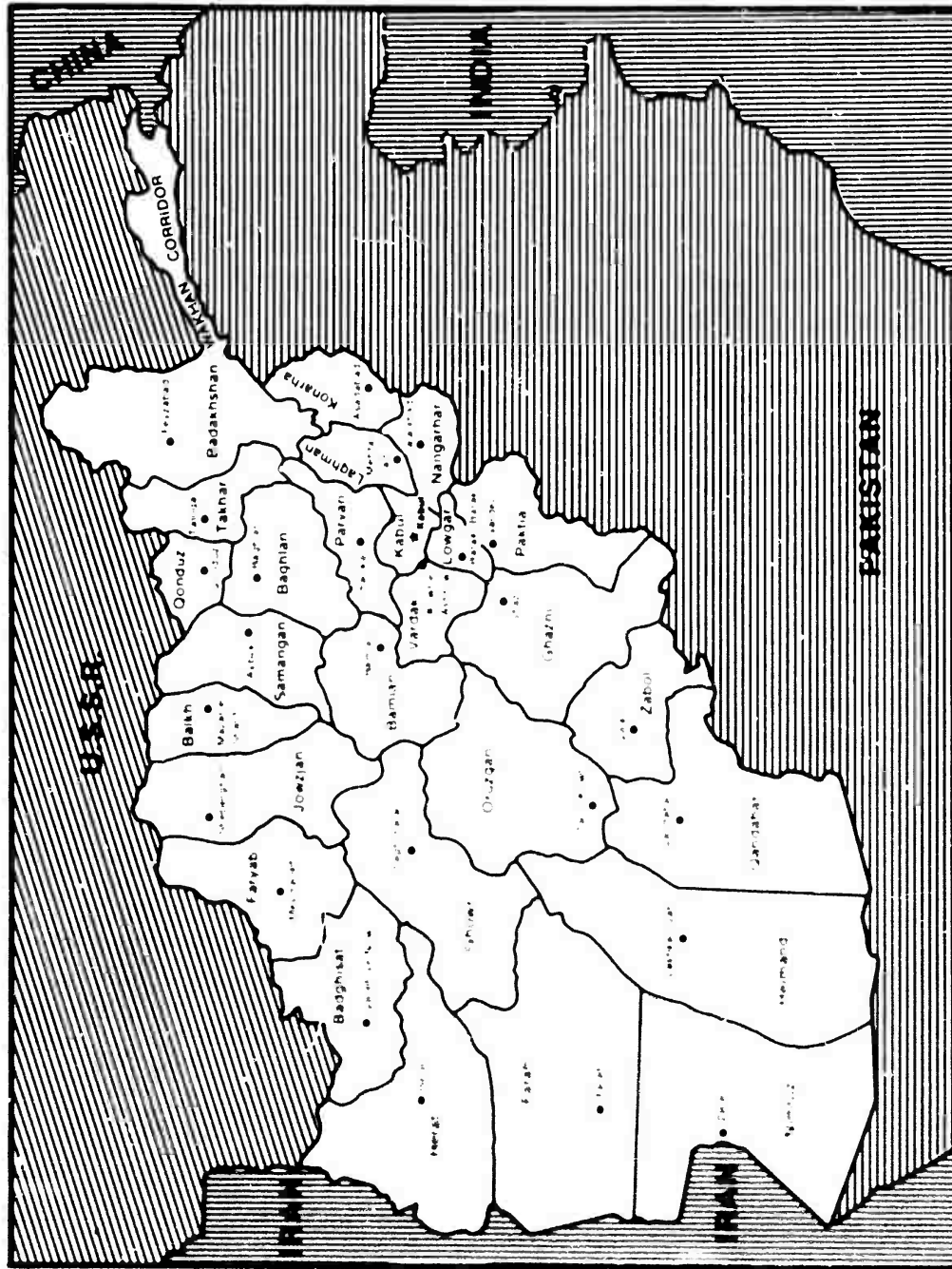
After the invasion, the Soviets reportedly claimed that President Amin had requested them, on 14 occasions, to send armed forces into the country, under terms of the Afghan-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation of 5 December 1978. Six years later, Babrak stated that Taraki asked 14 times for Soviet military support, and Amin asked three times for such support, "but the Soviets did not approve."⁹⁸ The Soviets never have officially disclosed, however, the dates or the manner in which these alleged 14 or 17 requests were made. Former Pakistani Foreign Minister Aga Shahi reported that when he once asked a senior Soviet official who specifically invited in the Soviet forces, the reply was "Babrak Karmal" (then in exile in Prague).⁹⁹

Article 4 of the Treaty of Friendship stated the following:

*The high contracting parties . . . shall consult each other and take by agreement appropriate measures to ensure the security, independence, and territorial integrity of the two countries.*¹⁰⁰

This wording, however, did not entitle the Soviets to intervene unilaterally. Conceivably, Amin may have agreed in late 1979 to a few additional Soviet military units to provide stiffening to the disintegrating Afghan army. But it is implausible that he requested the large force that landed in Kabul. A specially trained unit from this force then attacked his palace and killed him. This attack was in contravention to Article 6 of the Treaty, which stated that "each of the High Contracting Parties solemnly declares that it shall not join . . . in actions or measures directed against the other High Contracting Party."

The invasion began at 11 p.m. on 24 December 1979, when units belonging to the 105th Soviet Army Airborne Guards Division began to land at Kabul airport. Encountering no resistance,¹⁰¹ this landing was followed by similar landings of airborne troops at



Bagram Air Base near Kabul and by overland seizure of Shindand and Kandahar air bases in the west and south. The Soviet army airlift to Kabul continued around the clock for two days; by the morning of Thursday, 27 December 1979, some 5,000 Soviet soldiers were at the airfield. At about 7 o'clock that evening, under cover of darkness, Soviet armored units began to move into Kabul. By 11 p.m. the center of Kabul, including the radio station, was under Soviet control. Resistance elsewhere, especially at the Tajbeg Palace where Amin resided, continued until early in the morning of 28 December.¹⁰²

The Soviets reportedly suffered 25 killed and several hundred wounded; hundreds of Afghans were killed in the Tajbeg Palace battle. Elsewhere, elements of the Afghan 8th Infantry Division resisted until 5 January, suffering 2,000 killed.¹⁰³

Later, Babrak Karmal and the Soviets claimed that Amin had been captured by patriotic Afghan soldiers, tried by a revolutionary tribunal, and executed. Who these soldiers or tribunal members were never was revealed. What really happened was disclosed two years later in London by a defecting KGB major, Vladimir Kuzichkin, who apparently was involved in Afghanistan affairs at the time. According to his account a few hundred Soviet army commandos, plus a specially trained KGB assault unit, all of them dressed in Afghan army uniforms and using vehicles with Afghan army markings, attacked the palace with orders that no Afghan be left alive to reveal the involvement of Soviet personnel. Amin was found with a lovely young female drinking at a bar on the top floor and was shot outright.¹⁰⁴

By daylight of 28 December Kabul was under Soviet control. On Afghanistan's northern border Soviet troops were crossing the Amu Darya river to complete the occupation of the country. The Soviet Union seemingly had won the Great Game.



THE DECEMBER 1979 SOVIET INVASION CLIMAXED A century and a half of interest by the Russians in Afghanistan. For most of that period, until 1919, British power prevented Russian territorial encroachment or the absorption of Afghanistan. Most Afghans resented British military interventions and the loss of certain border areas to British India. But had it not been for the British, Afghanistan likely would have been absorbed into the Rus-

sian Empire, as had occurred to the Central Asian khanates to the north.

After the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 the Soviets continued the interest in Afghanistan displayed by the Tsars. But they were not in a position economically or militarily to do much about it for three decades. Nonetheless, Afghanistan was the first non-communist country to receive Soviet economic and military aid, before and after World War II; and by 1978 Soviet economic penetration of Afghanistan had made considerable headway. On the eve of the April 1978 leftist coup the USSR was Afghanistan's largest economic and military aid donor and its leading trading partner.

When the British withdrew from the subcontinent in 1947, after granting independence to India and Pakistan, neither of these new states nor Iran assumed a balance-of-power role in Afghanistan, as had the British. The United States probably was the only outside power strong enough to do that. But the United States passed up the offered opportunity in the late 1940s and early 1950s, despite repeated Afghan appeals for arms and economic aid.


The subsequent decision of then Prime Minister Mohammad Daoud in 1956 to turn to the Soviets for military aid set the stage for the end of Afghan independence. Two decades later, in April 1978, a small group of leftist Afghan military officers—many of whom had received training and indoctrination in the USSR—brought about the Marxist coup deposing Daoud. The events leading to the Soviet intervention thus were set in motion.

The Second Stage of the Afghan Revolution

The great April Revolution . . . has entered a new stage. Destroyed are . . . the bloody dynasty of Amin and his adherents . . . the bought tools of world imperialism, headed by United States imperialism.

Babrak Karmal speech, 27 December 1979

THE SETTING ON 28 DECEMBER 1979

HEN DAYLIGHT BROKE OVER KABUL ON 28 DECEMBER 1979 a grim, new chapter in the history of Afghanistan had begun. After 92 years a foreign power once again had occupied Kabul. Soviet tanks and armored personnel carriers guarded all key road intersections, as well as all six highways approaching the city. Other Soviet tanks and armored vehicles patrolled major streets. No Afghan soldiers were to be seen.

Early that morning, at 2:40 a.m., the seized Radio Kabul had announced that Babrak Karmal, exiled leader of the *Parcham* faction, was now General Secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), President of the country, and Commander of the armed forces.¹

Fifteen minutes later, Radio Kabul again went on the air to announce that because of "aggression, intervention, and provocations by the foreign enemies of Afghanistan and for the purpose of defending the gains of the Saur Revolution," the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) earnestly had demanded that the USSR render assistance, including military aid, to Afghanistan. The USSR had accepted the DRA request.² At 3:15 a.m. Radio Kabul announced

that Hafizullah Amin had been executed, after being sentenced to death by a revolutionary tribunal "for the crimes he has committed."

Few people in Afghanistan or in the outside world were deluded into thinking that the violent change of government had been an internal domestic affair. What was obvious to Afghans and to the foreign diplomatic community was that the Soviets had used military force to depose the ruling Marxist faction and to install a more compliant communist group in its place.

In taking over the country, the Soviets probably did not foresee the magnitude of the problems they would have to grapple with over the next five years. After the brutality of the Taraki-Amin period, they must have hoped that Babrak's installation would be viewed by Afghans with enthusiasm. Instead, the Soviets were confronted with an antagonistic public, incensed over their country's occupation by a foreign power and insulted by the imposition of a puppet regime. The Soviets undoubtedly did not anticipate the extent of resistance nor the physical destruction that their occupation would bring.

THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY

The Afghanistan that the Babrak government took over was in shambles. During the 20 months of *Khalq*-faction rule the country had deteriorated in almost every facet of life. More human suffering and economic disruption had occurred than probably at any time since the invasion of Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century. Yet in the next five years, 1980-84, more hardship and economic deterioration were to come. When New Year 1980 dawned, however, that deterioration could not be clearly foreseen.

Problems facing the new DRA government were serious. The machinery of government was nearly at a standstill. During the Taraki-Amin period several thousand government officials had been executed. Many more bureaucrats, along with many members of the educated and professional classes, had fled abroad. Now, with the takeover of government by the Soviet-installed *Parcham* faction, members of the rival *Khalq* faction who occupied all important government posts were in trepidation for their positions—and for their very lives. Few bureaucrats dared make decisions, for fear that their decisions would lead to demotion or dismissal—or worse.

THE MILITARY Of all parts of government, the situation in the armed forces perhaps was the worst. After the April 1978 coup

the communists had drastically purged the officer corps; additionally, perhaps 40 percent of the enlisted men and conscripts had deserted. Before the 1978 Marxist coup the army had had an authorized complement of 100,000 men and the air force of 10,000 men; when the Soviets intervened the DRA army had declined to at most 60,000 men and the DRA air force perhaps half its pre-coup number. The army officer corps that once numbered 8,000 officers now had at most half that number.³

Morale throughout the armed forces was low. When insurrections had broken out in the Afghan countryside during 1978 and 1979, most army units had responded poorly. When confronted with a local insurgency, DRA army units typically had done nothing, defected to the insurgents, or deserted in hopes that a disintegrating government would not track them down.

Defections and desertions were only part of the problem. *Khalq*-faction officers in the DRA armed forces outnumbered *Parcham*-faction officers by at least four to one.⁴ Like their civilian counterparts, these *Khalqis* now were uncertain about their fate and future prospects.

At the time of the Soviet invasion some form of insurrection or insurgency existed in probably 24 of the country's 29 provinces.⁵ The Soviets admitted to uprisings in 17 provinces.⁶ In most provinces, Kabul's control was tenuous; in several regions—notably in the mountainous central provinces of the Hazarajat and the Pakistan-bordering provinces of Kunar and Paktia—the government had lost control of the countryside, holding only the main towns.

THE RULING PDPA PARTY The situation within the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) also was poor. Its ranks had been decimated by purges carried out by the heretofore ruling *Khalq*-faction group; now with the *Parcham* faction in power the *Khalqis* looked to the future with concern.

Reliable figures on party membership at the time of the Soviet invasion do not exist. At the time of the 1978 coup the party claimed a total of 50,000 members and sympathizers, but a figure of 15,000 probably would be closer to reality.⁷

Twenty months later, when the Soviets invaded, the number of party followers had declined drastically because of internal purges or disillusionment. The American scholar who has most carefully examined this question estimates that the party had by then a hard

core of 2,000 to 3,000 activists (most of whom were Khalqis) and a total membership, including passive members and jailed Parchamis, of probably no more than 6,000.⁸

The Parchamis had suffered severely under the Taraki-Amin rule. In January 1980 Politburo member Anahita Ratebzad told a Czech interviewer that 1,000 party members [meaning Parchamis—Author] had been killed.⁹ Later, Babrak Karmal claimed to a West German newsman that “up to 4,500” party members [again meaning Parchamis—Author] had died and “approximately another 8,000 [were] jailed.”¹⁰ These totals probably were exaggerations. A Soviet source put the figure killed by the Khalqis as no higher than 500.¹¹

At the time of the Soviet intervention, 2,000 Parchamis were in prison and an estimated 500 to 700 Parchamis were at large and threatened with detention. When these two categories of Parchamis are added to the number of Khalqis, the combined PDPA party totaled little more than 6,000 members. Between the two factions the Khalqis were by all accounts in the majority, on both the civil and military sides.¹²

Out of a total Afghan population of perhaps 15 million at the time, the combined party represented probably a mere four-tenths of 1 percent of the population.

Of problems facing the Babrak government none was more serious than the poor reputation the PDPA had earned under Taraki-Amin rule. The party was despised by most of the population. A host of ill-conceived and unpopular measures had contributed to its unpopularity. These measures included badly implemented land reform, self-identification of the government with the generally disliked Soviet Union, suspected anti-Islamic and atheistic sentiments of the party, and substitution of the traditional Afghan national flag with a red banner hardly distinguishable from that of the Soviet Union.

In Kabul a major factor contributing to the DRA regime's bad image had been its brutality toward suspected opponents. Hardly an educated family existed that had not had some family member jailed, tortured, or executed. In 1980 the Babrak government told the Indian news agency, the Press Trust of India (PTI), that 8,400 persons had been killed or were missing during the Taraki-Amin period. 40 percent of them from the Kabul area where most of the country's educated element lived.¹³ Amnesty International put the number missing (probably executed) at 9,000.¹⁴ Most estimates put the number killed

at between 6,000 and 12,000. Few of those executed had received even a semblance of a judicial trial. Most had been arrested without any given reason.

Also, the Babrak government inherited an economy that was in disarray. Reviewing the period with a French interviewer, then Planning Minister Sultan Ali Keshtmand stated in 1980: "the economy had seriously deteriorated under Amin. Trade was in a disastrous state. Transport was disorganized."¹⁵ The poorly conceived and unpopular land reform program also had seriously discouraged agricultural production—the mainstay of the economy. Crop land was reduced by nearly 9 percent and grain production dropped 10 percent. Per capita national income fell by nearly 14 percent.¹⁶

Almost all Western and international institutional aid had been halted. Although Soviet and Eastern European economic aid soon would increase significantly, it could not quickly replace unfinished Western, World Bank, or Asian Development Bank projects. In many areas of the country, aid projects could not be implemented in face of the spreading insurgency.

STRATEGY OF THE SOVIET-BABRAK GOVERNMENT

While Babrak was waiting in Prague or Moscow in December 1979 for the Soviet invasion to begin, he likely was summoned by the Soviets to discuss future policies for Afghanistan once he was installed in power. The strategy that was settled on probably was drafted by the Soviet Embassy in Kabul, since Babrak himself had been in exile for 16 months and was out of touch with real events in the country. Had Babrak depended on news filtered and distorted by the Czech and Soviet press, he would have gained the impression that all was well in Afghanistan—that Taraki-Amin rule was a success. The Soviets obviously knew better and therefore must have been largely responsible for the adopted strategy.

The plan, as it was disclosed over the next half year, had the following seven main elements:

(1) The new Babrak government would seek to gain public sympathy by blaming the evils of the previous government on former President Hafizullah Amin personally; he was to be labeled an American CIA agent.

(2) Reconciliation of the estranged *Parcham* and *Khalq* factions within the PDPA would be given high priority, and *Khalqis* would be

allowed some role in the party and the government. They would not, however, be permitted to dictate policy nor hold any key positions in important party or government bodies. While Hafizullah Amin would be publicly denigrated, the first PDPA President of the country, Mohammad Taraki, would not be publicly criticized in order not to alienate further those Khalqis who had admired Taraki but opposed Amin.

Securing the cooperation of Khalqis was important for two reasons. **First**, the new government needed the help of as many Afghans as it could find to run the country—and party members were the only Afghans it could reasonably count on. **Second**, a united PDPA would help confer legitimacy on the Babrak Karmal regime, since the new government would be pictured as having been formed from within the ruling party. This view would support the Babrak government's claim that it merely represented a new phase in the rule of the legitimate PDPA-run government.

(3) Conciliatory domestic policies would be adopted, notably acting slowly on several previously initiated reform programs.

(4) Most political prisoners would be released, especially all Parchamis and anti-Amin Khalqis.

(5) The presence of Soviet armed forces and advisers in the country would be downplayed and explained as being "temporary." In confronting the armed insurgency in the countryside, the Soviet army would play only a backup, reserve role to the Afghan (DRA) army.

(6) The demoralized and decimated Afghan army would be strengthened. But for security reasons the Afghan air force for the time being would be kept inactive, leaving the Soviets to carry out the air war.

(7) To lay the foundation for long-term communist rule, the Soviets would step up the number of Afghan trainees and students sent to the Soviet Union for education.

During the next four years few of these strategies had much success. The public became increasingly hostile to the DRA regime, the PDPA itself remained deeply divided, and the Soviet military increasingly played the leading role in combating the insurgency. The Soviet policy that worried the resistance the most was that of training thousands of young Afghans in the Soviet Union. While years would elapse before this program could be properly assessed, many feared

that enough impressionable young Afghans would become indoctrinated in a pro-Soviet Communist mode to enable the Soviets to delegate most of the policy administration to Afghans.

THE STRUCTURE OF POLITICAL POWER

Under *Khalq*-faction rule (1978-79) the political structure of party and government in Afghanistan had been copied from the Soviet model. Its basic feature was the interlocking of party and government, with the party always supreme. All important government positions were reserved for party members. And party members were expected to join one of the following: the government, a quasi-governmental body, or a party front organization. When Babrak Karmal and his *Parcham* faction took over from the *Khalqis*, the structure was not altered. Though many *Khalqis* were demoted or purged from party and government positions and replaced by *Parchamis*, the framework itself was left intact.

What was new after the Soviet intervention was the enhanced position of the Soviets. As aptly described by an American scholar: before the invasion, the Soviets advised and the Afghans (*Khalqis*) decided; after the invasion, the Afghans (*Parchamis*) advised and the Soviets decided.¹⁷ Babrak Karmal and his cohorts were de facto Soviet puppets.

To understand the structure of power one must appreciate that three important bodies existed in both the party (PDPA) and the government (DRA).

- In the **party**, the important groups were the Politburo, the Secretariat, and the Central Committee.
- On the **government** side, the important groups were the Council of Ministers, the Presidium, and the Revolutionary Council.

PDPA PARTY BODIES Among all control bodies, party and government, the most important was the seven-to-nine-member *Politburo* (Political Bureau of the Central Committee). It set party and government policies and determined the most important personnel appointments. During 1980-84 it usually had nine members, with Babrak Karmal always serving as General Secretary, and Nur Ahmed Nur and Saleh Mohammad Zeary acting as Secretaries; they also held these titles concurrently in the Central Committee and the Secretariat.

These three office bearers—Babrak, Nur, and Zeary—plus four other members of the Central Committee comprised the seven-member (after 1981) *Secretariat*. After the Politburo, the Secretariat was next in importance. It cleared important appointments within the party and government and monitored implementation of party decisions.

Third was the party's *Central Committee*, with 36 to 46 members (36 initially in January 1980). In theory the Central Committee was the most important of the three party bodies, with responsibility for appointments to the Politburo and for all major policy decisions; but it was in fact a rubber-stamp group. During 1980-84 it met 11 times, in meetings called Plenums. The meetings held during this period numerically were labeled the 4th through the 14th Plenums. These Plenums usually met twice a year and then for only a day or two.

DRA GOVERNMENTAL BODIES The 23-member *Council of Ministers* (Cabinet) ran the government ministries and arguably was the most important governmental body. During 1980-84 Babrak Karmal (January 1980-June 1981) and then Sultan Ali Keshtmand (June 1981-on) served as Prime Minister. (Babrak Karmal remained President of the Revolutionary Council and the Presidium throughout the four-year period.)

Babrak's relinquishment of the Prime Minister's portfolio in June 1981 probably was at Soviet insistence. The Soviets must have been aware that the regime was despised by the Afghan public, seemingly more so than in Amin's time. They may have thought that by removing the most detested DRA leader from the prime ministership the regime might become more acceptable to the general public. In terms of the subsequent intensity of the resistance and the reaction of the outside world, the change made no difference. Its main effect was to heighten internal party rivalry: relations between Babrak and Keshtmand reportedly became strained as each insisted on his leadership prerogatives.

Next in importance to the Council of Ministers was the *Presidium* (7 to 11 members) of the Revolutionary Council; this group consisted of all Revolutionary Council office bearers plus some others. The Presidium's main role was to serve as an interim mini-legislature, provisionally approving laws and other state decisions

until the Revolutionary Council formally could ratify them. It also watched over the Council of Ministers (Cabinet). Few Presidium members were cabinet ministers, suggesting a deliberate separation of powers between the Presidium and the Cabinet.

Finally on the government side, the 57-member (January 1980) *Revolutionary Council* acted as the legislature. It met infrequently, at most once a year, and then for only one or two days. Its role was to approve laws and important government decisions and staff appointments, mostly those adopted by the Presidium in its absence.

ROLE OF THE SOVIET ADVISERS

After the Soviet invasion, no important civil or military decision could be made without Soviet consent. In fact, most initiatives came from Soviet advisers, with their nominal Afghan superiors acting as rubber stamps. The puppet nature of the DRA was no better shown than by the report that Baġrak was assigned a Soviet cook, bodyguard, and driver.¹⁸

Many Afghan refugees, fleeing to Pakistan and the West, have described the control exercised by the Soviets in the government. In the Ministry of Education, for example, Soviet advisers ran the school curriculum and textbook program and insisted on Afghan adoption of the Soviet educational system. In at least one case, a Soviet adviser arranged to have a complaining Afghan education official removed, and the official subsequently was executed.¹⁹

Soviet control over the Afghan Army was very evident. In December 1983 a defecting Afghan officer from the 7th Army Division, Colonel Mohammed Rahim, reported that the 50 Soviets attached to his 2,000-man division were its real commanders.²⁰

The importance of Soviet advisers also was evident by comparing some numbers. In the early months of 1980 the total number of effective PDPA party members (the only Afghans having a stake in the government) was about 6,000. By comparison, the number of Soviet advisers (civilian and military) immediately increased after the invasion, from 5,000-7,700 to 7,000-10,000, probably surpassing the total number of party members.²¹

In terms of military presence, while the DRA military probably numbered 30,000 to 50,000 men during 1980-84, Soviet armed forces in Afghanistan rose from an initial 80,000 to 115,000 men.

CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE DRA GOVERNMENT AND THE PDPA PARTY

In April 1980, four months after it came to power, the Babrak government issued two important documents.

- One document was the interim constitution of the DRA, called the **Basic Principles**.

- The other important document, the **Theses of the PDPA**, was akin to a party platform that described policies to be implemented by the government.

Neither document was reviewed nor debated by any constitutional convention or party conference; they merely were issued by fiat.

Two years later, in May 1982, a party conference announced the adoption of new **Party Rules** (a kind of constitution) governing party organization and behavior. These rules were similar to the secret 1965 PDPA constitution, which up to that point presumably had provided the framework for the party's behavior.

These three documents presumably served as basic documents governing the structure and policies of the DRA regime. They are revealing and deserve some examination.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE DRA Proclaimed to be the interim government constitution, the Basic Principles was declared effective as of 21 April 1980. Running more than 6,000 words, the document consisted of 10 chapters and 68 articles.²²

It declared that the *Loya Jirgah*, or Supreme Council, was "the highest organ of state power of the DRA," the composition of which was to be regulated by law (unspecified). "General secret, free, direct" elections to the *Loya Jirgah* were promised; the timing was to be determined by the interim Revolutionary Council.

Until the *Loya Jirgah* was constituted (such a Council never met from 1980 to 1984), political power had rested with the Revolutionary Council. Members of this Council (no number prescribed) were chosen by the Presidium of the same Revolutionary Council, subject to ratification by the full Revolutionary Council. Since members of the Presidium were to be chosen by the Revolutionary Council, a puzzle was created: which came first, the Presidium or the Revolutionary Council? In practice, such constitutional questions were academic. The party (and perhaps the Soviets) determined the membership of

the Presidium, the Revolutionary Council, and the Council of Ministers. Until the *Loya Jirgah* was convened the Revolutionary Council had the authority to make laws, develop plans, organize and staff the government, and determine the country's foreign relations.

The special role of the PDPA in the government was acknowledged in Article 4 of the Basic Principles. This article declared that the party was "the leading and guiding force of the society and state" and the "steadfast defender of the true interests of all the people of our country, Afghanistan."

A remarkable aspect of the document was the absence of any reference to "socialism" or "Marxism." One whole article (Article 11), however, was devoted to the DRA's special relationship with the USSR and countries of the "socialist alliance," despite the assertion that the DRA's foreign policy was to be based on "peaceful coexistence" and "active and positive nonalignment."

Several provisions acknowledged the importance of Islam. Article 5, for example, declared that the "sacred and true religion of Islam will be respected, observed and protected." This protection, however, was conditional. It was applicable only as long as religious followers did not "disturb the comfort and security of the society," or commit acts against "the interests of the DRA."

Freedom of speech was granted, but again this freedom was qualified. Article 29 guaranteed "freedom of speech and thought, the right of holding assemblies and peaceful demonstrations," but "in a form which will not disrupt peace and security" and which would be regulated by law. No mention was made of freedom of the press.

PARTY THESES On 17 April 1980, a few days before announcement of the DRA Basic Principles, the controlled Kabul press published the PDPA Theses, a document of more than 5,500 words contained in 19 numbered sections.²⁴

In effect a party platform, the Theses described the PDPA's philosophy and domestic and foreign policies. It called for raising living standards, expanding education, eliminating illiteracy, and achieving land reform and equity among Afghanistan's various tribes and ethnic groups. It condemned the "criminal Amin and perfidious actions of the CIA" for inflicting "serious damage to the unity of the party." It regretted that "thousands of innocent people were imprisoned . . . and (that) loyal cadres were eliminated."

As in the Basic Principles, no reference per se was made to socialism or Marxism, although familiar communist phrases such as "progressive and patriotic forces" and "workers and peasants" peppered the document. Perhaps most revealing of its ideological bent was the explicit praise expressed for the USSR's "Great October Socialist Revolution" and the importance the party placed on "friendship and brotherhood with the USSR." In fact, Section 16 candidly states that the DRA relies on the Soviet Union "for the defense and evolution of the *Saur* (April) Revolution and its aims."

NEW RULES (CONSTITUTION) OF THE PDPA In May 1982, two years after the Basic Principles and Theses were announced, the Kabul press disclosed that two months earlier, at the special March 1982 PDPA conference, new Party Rules (a constitution) had been adopted.²⁴

On examination, these rules proved similar to provisions of the secret 1965 PDPA constitution, which up to then presumably had governed the actions of the party. The new rules differed from the earlier constitution mostly by the absence of any reference to socialism or Marxism. Such references apparently were considered inappropriate for a country only in the "national-democratic" stage of Marxist development.²⁵

The real reason probably was to obscure the communist nature of the regime.

HIDING ITS COMMUNIST STRIPES Throughout its history, the PDPA had tried to mask its communist character. This policy started in 1965 with the secret PDPA constitution. Although the text of that document referred to socialism and Marxism, the existence of the constitution was revealed only to trusted members of the party. In the first parliamentary elections ever held in Afghanistan, in 1965, the few communist candidates did not disclose their Marxist or PDPA affiliations.²⁶

Though the three PDPA members elected in these parliamentary elections soon revealed publicly their Marxist leanings, the party in its public statements always was careful not to call itself a communist organization. President Taraki later said that "Afghanistan never had a party called the Communist Party, and there is not a Communist Party now."²⁷ Shortly after this statement was made, Deputy Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin told interviewers, when asked if the PDPA

were communist, "call us whatever you want. . . . We will never give you a clear-cut answer."²⁸

This non-disclosure policy continued after Babrak came to power. As mentioned, none of the three basic documents issued by the DRA government and the PDPA in 1980-82 contained explicit references to a socialist or Marxist orientation. When a correspondent of *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg) interviewed Babrak in March 1980, and made passing reference to his being a Marxist, Babrak responded: "permit me to ask when I have termed myself a Marxist after 27 December (1979)?"²⁹

In 1981, when an interviewer asked DRA Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost if his government were socialist or communist, the reply was: "it is neither; it is simply a national and a democratic government trying to implement the principles of a national democratic revolution."³⁰

The Babrak regime preferred to label itself as being in the "National-Democratic stage" of socialist state evolution.³¹ This statement was communist jargon to denote a state that was part way to becoming a "socialist" (communist) state. In an interview with a British correspondent in July 1981, Politburo member Anahita Ratebzad explained:

*Afghanistan will not see socialism in my lifetime. That will be for the younger generation of Afghans.*³²

EVOLUTION OF PDPA AND DRA LEADERSHIP

In order to assert its legitimacy as the rightful successor to the Amin-led government, and also to differentiate itself from that discredited regime, the Babrak government quickly described itself as representing the "new or second phase of the *Saur* (April) Revolution."³³

What was most significantly different about the "new phase" of the revolution—though never admitted by the Babrak government—was, of course, the Soviet occupation and Moscow's role as behind-the-scenes ruler. Another notable difference was the shift in PDPA party power from the majority *Khalq* faction to the minority *Parcham* faction. This shift is evident from the composition

of membership of the aforementioned six key party and governmental bodies.

Whereas Khalqis dominated these bodies during the Taraki-Amin period (1978-79), Parchamis sat in the saddle after the Soviet invasion. The extent of membership change is striking, especially in the PDPA Central Committee, the PDPA Politburo, and the Council of Ministers. Wholesale changes also must have occurred in the Revolutionary Council and in the Presidium. But the composition of these two bodies during the Taraki-Amin period was never clear, so a precise comparison cannot be made.

THE PDPA CENTRAL COMMITTEE The PDPA Central Committee (CC), which in theory constituted the supreme party body pending a formal party convention, underwent remarkable membership changes. Under Mohammad Taraki (April 1978-September 1979), the CC probably numbered at most 38 members; of the original appointees, 12 later were purged, imprisoned, or killed by Taraki, before he himself was purged and killed on Amin's orders. During the short Hafizullah Amin period (September-December 1979) the committee had at most 33 members, of whom 12 were newcomers brought in by Amin.

When Babrak came to power he in turn purged or executed 25 CC members, or 76 percent of those of the Amin period. He then reinstated 14 previous members (including himself), retained seven members from the Amin period, and appointed 15 newcomers. These new members brought the total Central Committee membership to 36.³⁴

This drastic action, however, was not the end of changes in the CC. In June 1981 Babrak added 10 new members, reportedly to increase the number of Parchamis, bringing the body to a record strength of 46 members. In 1983 six more full members were added, leading to a total of 52 full members, and 27 identified alternates.³⁵

Of these 52 members only three had retained their CC membership through all three periods: Abdur Rashid Arian; Mohammed Ismail Danesh; and Saleh Mohammad Zeary. How all three managed to survive the intra-party convulsions is not clear. Possibly, they had been relatively uncommitted to either faction; or they may have been saved on Soviet insistence. In any event Zeary, usually dubbed a Khalqi by origin, soon emerged to be one of the most prominent persons in the party hierarchy.

THE POLITBURO The Politburo, the most important of all the bodies ruling Afghanistan, also underwent massive transformations. Of the 10 persons who served on the nine-person body during the Taraki period, only four remained during the Amin period, when the body shrank to seven. Then Babrak expanded the body back to nine members and stacked it in his favor.³⁶ He purged six of the Amin-period members (most were executed or just disappeared), retained one (Zeary), reinstated three Taraki-era members, and appointed five newcomers.

All these changes sharply reduced the proportion of Khalqis in the Politburo. At the beginning of the Taraki period, right after the 1978 coup, the Politburo showed an almost even balance between Khalqis and Parchamis. During Amin's period it became a *Khalq*-dominated body; then under Babrak it was an overwhelmingly *Parcham*-weighted body (seven of nine seats in December 1984).

BACKGROUND OF POLITBURO MEMBERS All nine members of the 1984 Politburo were college graduates, although the college-level military training of the two military members was not of high standard. Three Politburo members were medical doctors (Zeary, Anahita, and Najibullah), two were military officers (Mohammed Aslam Vatanjar and Mohammed Rafiee), and the other four had received liberal arts training (Babrak, in law and political science; Keshtmand, in economics; Nur, in international relations; and Ghulam Dastigir Panjsheri, in letters).

The two military members had studied in the Soviet Union; Anahita had studied nursing in the United States. Many members had a long history of close association with the Soviet Embassy.

PRESIDIUM OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL Little is known about the Presidium during the Taraki and Amin periods. In January 1980, right after the Soviet intervention, it consisted of seven members, of whom four were Parchamis and three Khalqis. In June 1981 the Presidium was expanded to nine members, seven of whom were Parchamis and two Khalqis.³⁷

Babrak was Presidium President throughout.

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (CABINET) Like other key party and governmental bodies, the Cabinet also underwent massive changes during the Taraki, Amin, and Babrak periods. During the Taraki and Amin periods, the Cabinet was weighted toward Khalqis

(especially under Amin); but the opposite occurred under Babrak. In Babrak's several cabinets, numbering 20 to 24 persons, all but four ministers were Parchamis. The four Khalqis were as follow: Mohammed Aslam Watanjar, Minister of Communications; Mohammed Ismail Danesh, Minister of Mines and Industry; Sayed Mohammed Gulabzoy, Minister of Interior; and Sher Jan Mazdooryar, Minister of Transportation and Tourism. Indicative of *Khalq* dominance rather than *Parcham* in the DRA military was the fact that three of the four *Khalq*-labeled ministers were military officers.

MOST IMPORTANT PERSONAGES IN THE DRA The most important leaders of the DRA government can be identified in two ways:

- One way is to examine the composition of the nine-member Politburo, the single most important governing body.
- The other way is to examine the membership of all six key party and governmental bodies, and identify those persons who sat on the most bodies.

By the latter criterion we find one additional party official (Lieutenant General Abdul Qader) to be important, in addition to the nine Politburo members.

Curiously, the Politburo in Afghanistan did not publicize the ranking of its members, in contrast to the practice in the Soviet Union. Afghan Politburo members generally were listed publicly in alphabetical order. The only known published ranking appeared in an undated booklet titled *Handbook for Party Activists of the Democratic People's Party of Afghanistan*. Since this *Handbook* refers to the Sixth PDPA Plenum held in June 1981, it probably was published later in that year. The *Handbook* ranked the nine Politburo members as follows:

Babrak Karmal
 Sultan Ali Keshtmand
 Anahita Ratebzad
 Saleh Mohammad Zeary
 Ghulam Dastagir Panjsheri
 Nur Ahmad Nur
 Najibullah Ahmedzai (Najib) (known as Dr. Najibullah)
 Mohammed Aslam Watanjar
 Mohammad Rafi

Alternate members were Mohammed Baryalai and Mohammed Ismail Danesh. The following were Secretariat members: Babrak Karmal; Saleh Mohammad Zeary; Nur Ahmad Nur; Mahmud Baryalai; and Niaz Mohammed Mohmand.

If the second criterion of measurement is used (those leaders who sat on the most important governing party and government bodies), seven Politburo persons are found as members of at least four of the six most important bodies. Of the two Politburo members who sat on fewer than four bodies, one—Dr. Najibullah, head of the Secret Police, KHAD*—certainly was one of the most powerful and feared government leaders. The other, Dastagir Panjsheri, was relatively unimportant. One non-Politburo member, Lieutenant General Abdul Qader, Defense Minister beginning in January 1981, also was important, not only because of his position but because he sat on four of the six bodies.

The single most important person among DRA and PDPA leaders, clearly, was Babrak Karmal. He was the only one to hold positions on all six bodies, for at least part of the period. When he stepped down as Prime Minister he still retained all his top positions in the other five PDPA party and DRA government bodies. In government publications after June 1981 he usually was described as General Secretary of the PDPA Central Committee and President of the Revolutionary Council.

After Babrak, the most important DRA leaders were Sultan Ali Keshtmand, Saleh Mohammad Zeary, and Dr. Najibullah. Each had the potential of being picked at some time by the Soviets to replace Babrak.

Afghan emigres and foreign observers who personally were acquainted with the top PDPA leaders always emphasized one general characteristic about them—these leaders were strikingly ignorant of world affairs or history, and of the real situation in the Soviet Union. "They were like horses with blinders," said one emigre.⁴⁸

● An American reporter who interviewed Babrak in the 1960s when he was in parliament, found him unaware of the French Revolution or of any other mid-nineteenth century European revolution. He was cognizant only of the Russian Revolution.⁴⁹

* KHAD stands for *Kheda-mati-i-Etal'at-i-Dolati*, State Information Service. (See the chapter on the Secret Police (KHAD) and Human Rights at page 263.)

- An Afghan who knew Politburo member Nur Ahmad Nur before the April 1978 coup said: "it was difficult to talk with him because his knowledge and appreciation of domestic and world affairs was so narrow."

- "As a group," said another emigre, "the party members were not really well educated and almost none of the party leaders was well read."

- Several emigres summed up the PDPA leaders as "really not being knowledgeable."

Though many of the PDPA leaders were idealists, they clung to a distorted communist view of the world.⁴⁰

SHIFTS IN THE PECKING ORDER

During 1980-84 discernible changes were noted in the de facto rankings of the top personages. Seemingly downgraded to some degree were four persons: Babrak Karmal, Mohammad Rafi, Mohammed Aslam Watanjar, and Assadullah Sarwari. Conversely, three persons were arguably upgraded in importance: Sultan Ali Keshtmand, Abdul Qader, and Anahita Ratebzad.

Of those downgraded, Babrak gave up his position in 1981 as Prime Minister and thereby his seat in the Council of Ministers. This relinquishment probably was done on Soviet insistence, in the hope of making the government more palatable to the hostile Afghan public. Still, Babrak remained the leading Afghan communist figure, holding on to all the most important party positions and to the Presidency of the Revolutionary Council and Presidium. No important governmental decision ostensibly could be taken without his approval.

The reason for Rafiee's demotion is not clear; it may have been due to incompetence. In September 1981 he gave up his position as Minister of Defense to receive senior military training in the Soviet Union; on his return he was not given back his Defense portfolio, but was appointed Deputy Prime Minister, a face-saving position with little power or responsibility.

The reason for Watanjar's slippage also is not clear; it also may have been connected to incompetence or the fact that originally he was a *Khalq*-faction member.

Sarwari's demotion, by contrast, is clearly explainable. As Secret Police chief under President Taraki, Sarwari reportedly personally

took part in the torture of Keshtmand when Keshtmand was imprisoned in August 1980. Granting of asylum in the Soviet Embassy—along with Mohammed Watanjar and Sayed Mohammed Gulabzoy when Amin seized power from Taraki in September 1979—in a sense laundered Sarwari's reputation. This laundering made it awkward for the Soviets to allow him to be later arrested and executed by the Parchamis. Perhaps, too, he was a long-time Soviet agent and the Soviets insisted that his life be spared. Sarwari nevertheless ultimately was punished by being removed, in June 1980, from his post as Deputy Prime Minister to receive "medical treatment" in the Soviet Union; after this "treatment" he was appointed Ambassador to Mongolia. At the same time he apparently was stripped of membership in the Politburo.⁴¹

Of the three persons whose standing seemingly was upgraded, the case of Keshtmand is understandable: he was elevated to Prime Minister. As for Anahita, she joined the Presidium in June 1981, thereby having her status raised to that of a person belonging to four DRA and PDPA bodies. Qader clearly rose in importance during the period. He became a member of four bodies by being appointed first Acting Minister of Defense, in January 1981, and then, in September 1982, full Minister of Defense.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES OF PDPA AND DRA LEADERS

Appreciating the quality of leadership of the DRA requires an understanding of the backgrounds of the principal leaders. Biographies of the four most important leaders—Babrak, Keshtmand, Zeary, and Dr. Najibullah—are given below. The biographies of eight others are given in Appendix A: Shah Mohammed Dost, Sayed Mohammed Gulabzoy, Nur Ahmad Nur, Dastagir Panjsheri, Abdul Qader, Anahita Ratebzad, Mohammad Rafi, and Mohammed Aslam Watanjar.

1. BABRAK KARMAL

Babrak Karmal, or Babrak, as he usually was known, clearly was the most important person in the Babrak regime. His titles during the period 1980-83 always included those of General Secretary of the PDPA Central Committee and President of the Revolutionary Council. For 18 months (January 1980-June 1981) he also held the position of Prime Minister.

Babrak was born on 6 January 1929 near Kabul of an upper middle class family. His father was a senior army officer who served as a provincial governor and retired as a major general in 1965. Family wealth and standing enabled Babrak to attend the prestigious Amani (Nejat) School in Kabul, operated with West German government assistance; he graduated in 1948. At school he was a mediocre student, did not mingle well, and generally was ignored by his fellow pupils. In 1951, on his second attempt, he entered Kabul University's College of Law and Political Science.⁴²

By then he was active in student politics—even before his formal admission to the university he had become a member of the Student Union—and he soon gained a reputation as an impressive speaker. His anti-regime activities at the university led to three years in jail, 1953-56. In jail Babrak met a dedicated communist and fellow prisoner, Mir Akbar Khyber. Khyber, whose April 1978 assassination precipitated the Marxist coup, was instrumental in convincing Babrak to become a communist.

After his release, Babrak worked for a year as a German and English translator and then did two years of compulsory military service in the army. Discharged in 1959 he returned to Kabul University and graduated in 1960 at the age of 31. He found employment in the Ministry of Education and later in the Ministry of Planning.

About 1964 Babrak quit the government to devote full time to politics. In 1965 he was one of the founding members of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA); in that same year he was elected to parliament (*Wolesi Jirga*) from a Kabul constituency, one of three PDPA members to win election in that first free Afghan parliamentary election. (The others were Anahita Ratebzad and Nur Ahmad Nur, both also Parchamis.)

Two years later, in 1967, the PDPA split into two de facto parties with the same PDPA name; Babrak led the *Parcham* (banner) faction, so named because of the party's publication. The other faction was the *Khalq* (masses), also named after that faction's publication. In 1969, in Afghanistan's second and last free parliamentary elections, Babrak won again. This time he was only one of two communists elected; the other was his leftist rival, Hafizullah Amin of the *Khalq* faction. Babrak remained in parliament until 1973, when parliament was dissolved following the coup that brought Mohammad Daoud back to power.

Babrak's *Parcham* faction actively supported Daoud to bring off his 1973 coup and consolidate his power afterward. All political parties nominally were banned after 1973, but the *Parcham* faction continued to function semi-openly. Though Babrak himself was not given a government position under Daoud, some of Babrak's *Parcham* colleagues were. For the first year or so after the 1973 coup Daoud periodically consulted Babrak on political questions. Gradually, however, Daoud distanced himself from Babrak and his fellow Marxists; by 1975 no consultation or cooperation was carried out. Disenchantment by Babrak with Daoud steadily grew and contributed to the *Parcham* decision to reunite with the rival *Khalq* party in July 1977 and plan the overthrow of the government.

After the reunited party's successful coup nine months later (in April 1978), Babrak initially was given the positions of PDPA



AP Wire World Photo

BABRAK KARMAL ... most important person in the DRA regime after the Soviet intervention. Usually known as "Babrak."

Politburo Secretary, Vice Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, and Deputy Prime Minister. Two months later Babrak and his leading *Parcham* colleagues were purged from party and government power. Babrak was "exiled" to Czechoslovakia as Ambassador. Two months later, accused by the Taraki regime of plotting against it, Babrak was dismissed as Ambassador, removed from the PDPA Central Committee, and ordered home. Instead, he remained in Czechoslovakia where he was supported by the Czechs and Soviets. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979, the Soviets brought Babrak back to Kabul to become the head of the new DRA government.

Though Babrak later claimed that he was in Afghanistan at the time of the coup—in fact, the party line later was that "he had visited Kabul clandestinely on three separate occasions and that during the month of December [1979] he already was in Kabul ready to assume power"⁴³—few people in Kabul at the time believed this story. The fact that it was part of the Soviet-fabricated cover story to justify the Soviet intervention was corroborated by a defecting Afghan career diplomat; this diplomat reported that a Czech official had confirmed to him that Babrak was still in Prague when the Soviets invaded.⁴⁴

Babrak's ties with the Soviets began early and always were close. By the late 1950s he was a frequent visitor to the Soviet Embassy. Before the 1978 coup, he was the Afghan most conspicuously associated with the Soviets. According to a defecting Soviet KGB* official, Babrak was in fact a long-time KGB agent.⁴⁵ Though claiming to be of Pushtun origin, Babrak spoke *Dari* (Afghan Persian) as his first language. Babrak married and fathered four children, but his wife was not prominent publicly until about 1983. More widely known was his long-time extramarital relationship with former parliamentarian and fellow Politburo member Anahita Ratebzad, Afghanistan's leading woman communist. This intimate relationship reportedly terminated after Babrak became President, probably for the sake of appearance, although the two remained close friends. Babrak's father disowned him in 1952; but two of his four brothers became prominent communists, and a third studied in the Soviet Union.

* KGB stands for *Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti*, Committee of State Security, the political and federal police and intelligence and counterintelligence agency of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Secret Police.

In his youth and early manhood, Babrak clearly was an idealist, determined to try to modernize Afghanistan. Although his radicalism led to ostracism by his father and the upper class establishment from which he came, he never retreated from his commitment to communist ideology. Not a good organizer, he nevertheless won a following by the force of his personality and character.

Various Afghan emigres who knew Babrak have described him as not being particularly intelligent. At the Faculty of Law and Political Science he did not distinguish himself academically. And while in parliament from 1965 to 1973, he neither was deemed brilliant nor did he earn intellectual respect.

In parliament, he almost never spoke extemporaneously. He would read from a prepared speech in *Dari* which, according to one account, then would be delivered without change in the sister language, *Pushtu*, by his PDPA parliamentary colleague, Nur Ahmad Nur.⁴⁶ Babrak's speeches after he became President and Prime Minister were long, rambling, repetitious, and dull. Rarely did they contain much factual detail.

2. SULTAN ALI KESHTMAND

As DRA Prime Minister, Sultan Ali Keshtmand was second in importance to Babrak Karmal. Born in 1936 near Kabul into a small trader's family, he did well in school; at Kabul University he earned a degree in economics. From 1960 to 1972 Keshtmand held a position in the Ministry of Mines and Industry. An original member of the first PDPA Central Committee in 1965, he ran unsuccessfully in that year for a seat in parliament.⁴⁷

When the PDPA broke up into two parties in 1967, he joined Babrak Karmal and the *Parcham* wing. In 1977, when the PDPA reunited, Keshtmand became a member of the Politburo. When the party seized power in 1978, he served briefly as Minister of Planning. In August 1978, he was arrested for allegedly plotting against Mohammad Taraki and was sentenced to death. In October 1979 this sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, probably as a result of Soviet pressure. When the Soviets installed the *Parcham* faction to power Keshtmand became, concurrently, Minister of Planning, a Deputy Prime Minister, a Politburo member, and Vice President of the Revolutionary Council. In the Cabinet reorganization of July

1981 he became Prime Minister and Minister of Planning, but soon dropped the Planning portfolio.

Westerners who met Keshtmand, including this author, found him one of the more impressive of the DRA leaders. Though soft-spoken, he was self-assured and energetic and gave the impression of being very intelligent. His English was fluent.

While in prison from 1978 to 1979 he reportedly was tortured, but the experience apparently did not leave any permanent physical effects. Ethnically, he belongs to the Mongoloid-looking Hazara minority; by birth he would be classified a *Shia Muslim*, a minority religious group. Keshtmand's wife is a leader in the Democratic Women's Organization of Afghanistan.

After Keshtmand became Prime Minister, probably on Soviet insistence, persistent rumors told of conflict between Babrak Karmal and Keshtmand. Each was struggling to be the leading figure in the country.

Afghan emigres who knew Keshtmand described him as "hard working," a "good administrator," and in terms of intelligence and capability "perhaps the best of the lot." These emigres also described him as reticent and quiet mannered. Some emigres speculated that the Soviets chose him as Prime Minister in hopes that his *Shia Moslem* background might make the DRA regime more palatable to the Khomeini government in Iran.⁴⁸

3. (DR.) SALEH MOHAMMAD ZEARY

One of the most intelligent of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) leaders, Dr. Saleh Mohammad Zeary politically is remarkable for his chameleon-like ability to remain in the good graces of all the *Khalq*- and *Parcham*-led governments since 1978. Born in Kandahar in 1937, he graduated from Kabul University's Medical School after reportedly leading his class for seven years (some knowledgeable emigres, however, dispute this statement). A founding member of the PDPA Central Committee, Zeary was an unsuccessful contestant in the 1969 elections for parliament; after the elections he was arrested and jailed for six years. Following the 1978 coup he became Minister of Agriculture and Land Reform, a key ministry at the time. In July 1979, after a purported disagreement with Amin, he was shifted to the Ministry of Public Health.⁴⁹



(DR.) SALEH MOHAMMAD ZEARY
Noted for his chameleon-like ability to stay in the good graces of both factions. He is an advocate of unity.



SULTAN ALI KESHTMAND
DRA Prime Minister, second in importance to Babrak Karmal. Original member of the first PDPA Central Committee. Called "best of the lot."

Unique among members of Amin's Politburo, Zeary was retained in that body after Amin's death by Babrak Karmal and, in fact, was made one of three Secretaries, the most important party position. This appointment probably was at Soviet insistence, to show some *Khalq* representation on the Secretariat. Though he held no Cabinet portfolios in the Babrak regime, Zeary was a member of the Presidium of the Revolutionary Council and also was chairman of the PDPA front organization, the National Fatherland Front.

Westerners who have met Zeary, including this author, found him fluent in English, highly energetic, and voluble. Afghan emigres who knew Zeary also described him as "talkative" and bright. Some charged him as being a regular narcotic user (marijuana) and an alcoholic.⁵⁰ A former Afghan ambassador, who knew Zeary, gave a different picture:

*Zeary is essentially an educated simpleton, a better edition of Taraki. Zeary has major weaknesses: he has no administrative skill nor does he work well with others. He is not what you would call an able man.*⁵¹

A consistent advocate of unity within the PDPA since 1980, Zeary conceivably might be tapped by the Soviets at some future time to become Prime Minister.

4. DR. NAJIBULLAH AHMEDZAI (OR NAJIB)

As head of the DRA Secret Police, KHAD, the equivalent of the Soviet KGB (the Soviet organization in charge of espionage and counterespionage; the Soviet Secret Police), Dr. Najibullah Ahmedzai (Najib) was one of the most important--and feared--leaders in the Babrak regime.

He was born in 1947 into a prominent landowning family in Lowgar province. Najib attended Habibia High School in Kabul and graduated from Kabul University's Medical College in 1975. After finishing high school, he joined the PDPA and twice was jailed for anti-regime political activities; these incarcerations contributed to the delay in completing his medical studies. Burly in size, he served as Babrak's bodyguard during Babrak's parliamentary years (1965-73) and earned the nickname of "Najib the bull." He is said to be a cousin of Babrak Karmal and always has been one of Babrak's most trusted colleagues.⁵²

In 1977 Najibullah became a member of the reunited PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) Central Committee. After the April 1978 coup he was not given a ministerial position. But in July he was among those leading Parchamis exiled diplomatically abroad--in his case to Tehran as Ambassador to Iran. After serving there only two months, he was among those charged by the Taraki-led government as plotting against the Taraki regime; he was dismissed and ordered home. He cleaned out the embassy's till, instead, and fled into asylum in Eastern Europe, from where he was brought back to Kabul by the Soviets after their December 1979 invasion. In the Babrak regime he was appointed to the PDPA Central Committee and made head of the Afghan Secret Police (KHAD); he held this post through 1984. In June 1981 he was elevated to the Politburo as an ordinary member.

Najibullah is said to be good looking and reportedly speaks English and Urdu. He is married and has a daughter. Otherwise little is known about him. A Western-educated Afghan who called on him in

Tehran during Najibullah's brief tenure there as Afghan Ambassador found him personable and "surprisingly intelligent and very smart."⁵³

Others who personally were interrogated by him after he became KHAD chief reported him as a fearsome, cold-blooded thug, who liked to brandish a revolver in front of those he questioned. He is not considered to possess leadership qualities. But some observers consider him to be a possible heir apparent to Babrak.

PROBLEMS AND EVOLUTION OF THE PDPA

When the Soviets installed the Babrak regime, a principal Soviet objective was to eliminate PDPA factionalism. A major element of this policy was to bring about a reconciliation between the *Khalq* and *Parcham* factions without, however, allowing the majority Khalqis a dominant role. This latter condition made reconciliation impossible. Early in 1980 the party agreed to Babrak's formal proposal "to strike out the very words '*Khalq*' and '*Parcham*' from the party vocabulary."⁵⁴

But many Parchamis had scores to settle, while Khalqis deeply resented their demoted status and power.

CONTINUING PARCHAM-KHALQ RIVALRY

The most striking aspect of the party's evolution during the period 1980-84 was the unremitting bitter feud between the *Parcham* and *Khalq* factions. Reasons for mutual antagonism were many and deep, and never were resolved. DRA Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost told an interviewer in September 1981: "I will be less than candid if I did not admit that a certain degree of friction has remained in the rank and file membership of the PDPA because some of these lower cadre are still infected by the *Khalq-Parcham* feud."⁵⁵

In July 1983 Babrak told the Central Committee "we have not succeeded in securing organization unity. . . . Lack of mutual trust inside the party is still evident."⁵⁶

PARCHAMI COMPLAINTS Many Parchamis were bitter over the cavalier and brutal treatment the *Parcham* faction experienced during the Taraki-Amin period. Babrak claimed that 4,500 party members (mostly Parchamis) had been killed by the Khalqis and another 8,000 imprisoned. Among leading Parchamis, Prime Minister

Keshtmand had been tortured into making a publicized confession of plotting against the Taraki-led government. On his release from prison after the Soviet invasion, Keshtmand was taken to Moscow for medical treatment.

The Parchamis also accused the Khalqis of mishandling the reins of government during the tenures of Taraki and Amin, thereby bringing discredit to the party. The Parchamis pointed to the brutality of the Taraki-Amin period, the hastily implemented and unpopular reforms, and the unfurling of a new national flag almost indistinguishable from that of the Soviet Union.

KHALQI COMPLAINTS As for the Khalqis, installation of the Babrak regime meant that the *Khalq* faction was relegated to second-class status despite a majority membership in the party. Many Khalqi nationalists blamed the Parchamis for abetting the Soviet occupation, which, as the years passed, assumed a permanent appearance.

In addition, some Khalqis felt the wrath of the Parchamis for the persecution the Khalqis had inflicted on the rival faction during 1978-79. In 1980, 15 leading Khalqis had been executed for criminal behavior, according to a public announcement.⁵⁷ Perhaps a dozen other Khalqi leaders simply disappeared after the Soviet invasion, undoubtedly secretly executed.

For Khalqis outside the military, the Babrak takeover usually meant demotion in government and party positions. Two former Afghan officials in the Ministry of Education reported that, where before the Soviet invasion the Khalqis held all the top Ministry positions, totaling 200 posts, after Babrak came to power most of these Khalqis were demoted. One former official believed that virtually all Khalqis in the Ministry of Education had been removed to less important jobs; the other estimated that 80 percent had been demoted and that those who were allowed to remain in their positions were either "non-dangerous" or in inconsequential positions.⁵⁸

Nowhere was *Parcham*-faction ascendancy more galling to the Khalqis than in the military, where Khalqi officers outnumbered Parchami officers by four or five to one.⁵⁹ When Babrak attempted, in May 1980, to replace seven Khalqi army commanders with Parchami officers, the Khalqis simply refused to acknowledge the orders and sent the Parchami officers back to Kabul.⁶⁰

The fact that the Babrak government (and the Soviets) did nothing at the time to punish the rebellious Khalqis was indicative of the Babrak regime's general weakness. Credible evidence exists that three Khalqi-led coups were attempted or plotted in 1980, and another one in 1981.⁶¹

The fact that these coups were even ventured, given the overwhelming position of the Soviet occupation army, is astonishing; these coup attempts can be explained only by the feeling of despair that must have prevailed among the perpetrators. In each case Soviet troops helped quell the rebels. Khalqis involved may have hoped that a swift and successful coup would leave the Soviets no recourse but to accept the new party leaders.

A sore point for the Khalqis undoubtedly was that their majority status in the party did not bring them commensurate power.⁶² At the time of the Soviet takeover Khalqis reportedly made up two-thirds of the party's civilian membership and four-fifths of the military membership.⁶³

In March 1982 Afghan exiles and Western diplomats estimated the PDPA's real strength at about 11,000 members, of whom 8,000 were Khalqis and 3,000 Parchamis.⁶⁴

Aware that the party constitution and other documents made repeated reference to democratic principles, Khalqis believed that their majority in the party entitled them at least to parity in party positions and key government jobs. Instead, the Parchamis in January-February 1980 removed many Khalqis from executive positions in the civilian ministries; and in July 1980 they extended the purge. Also, at almost all party deliberations and levels Khalqis found that the Parchamis rigged meetings and expanded key bodies to enhance their control. While the Soviets probably condoned some of this rigging, the Soviets also apparently attempted to foster unity and reconciliation; Soviet interventions probably prevented a total purge of Khalqis from senior party and ministerial positions. The Soviets were less successful, though, at preventing purges at middle and lower party levels.

The seriousness of the split between the two factions can be appreciated by the party's inability, six years after coming to power in 1978, to convene a party congress. Instead, a national "conference" was held in March 1982; but, because of deep divisions, the conference was terminated after only two days. (The distinction between a

congress and a conference is important in Soviet and communist political terminology.)⁶⁵

The *Khalqi-Parcham* rivalry even extended to Afghan students and diplomats in the Soviet Union. A girl who studied at a university in Moscow, and who defected in 1982 with her family to Peshawar, Pakistan, recounted her experience of the *Khalq-Parcham* feud at the university:

*Often Khalqis and Parchamis fought each other and on one or two occasions police interfered and separated them. . . . Parchamis and Khalqis have their own separate meetings, in which they constantly conspire against each other. . . . In the Afghan Embassy in Moscow, two Khalqis were pushed out of the third-floor window to their deaths.*⁶⁶

One consequence of this internecine rivalry was the mutual assassination of Parchami and Khalqi members. During 1980 and 1981, several hundred party members were killed by other party members; at one period the number of such assassinations ran as high as 12 a night in Kabul.

A by-product of Khalqi resentment was the evidence of extensive Khalqi cooperation with resistance elements. In 1980 and 1981 numerous such incidents were reported; these actions may have been motivated as much by nationalist resentment of the Soviet occupation as by fury that the Soviets had been instrumental in making the *Parcham* faction top dog.

FUTURE OF THE KHALQ-PARCHAM RIVALRY According to knowledgeable Afghan emigres the rift between the two parties will continue indefinitely. "It will last a thousand years," said one ex-ambassador.

The basis for a lasting split, he and some other emigres avow, is ethnic: Khalqis are almost exclusively *Pushtu*-speaking, while Parchamis are *Dari* (Persian) speakers.

When Taraki and Amin were in power (1978-79) they favored Pushtuns in government (especially Khalqi Pushtuns); allegedly, most of the Afghans (party members and others) who were executed during this period were non-Pushtuns.⁶⁷

THE PDPA EXPANDS ITS MEMBERSHIP

At the time the Babrak regime took over and released all incarcerated Parchami members, the PDPA probably had little more than 6,000 members, combining Khalqis and Parchamis. Over the next five years, as a result of repeated membership drives—directed especially at those in government offices, state enterprises, and the military—the party grew to perhaps 20,000 to 40,000 persons, including candidate (probationary) members. During 1980 and 1981 the party may have grown to between 10,000 and 15,000 members and candidate members.⁶⁸

1982 PARTY MEMBERSHIP Then in the early spring of 1982 the government began mentioning much higher numbers, all of them roughly similar.⁶⁹ In March 1982 the credentials committee of the aforementioned PDPA conference reported “62,820 full and candidate members . . . a gain of 21,700 since August 1980.” In that same month Babrak told a BBC correspondent that the membership was “over 70 thousand,” while in April 1982 Dr. Najibullah told a Czech journalist it was “exactly” 62,000. In line with the credentials committee figure, Nur Ahmad Nur, who followed party affairs closely, stated in a domestic Kabul Radio broadcast, “63,000 members and candidate members.” These claims appear to be exaggerated and it is doubtful that an accurate tally existed.

Actual membership probably was lower than the 63,000 figure generally claimed. This possibility is suggested by Babrak, who said in a February 1982 speech that “several thousand original and probationary members” of the Kabul city PDPA organization constituted the “biggest part” of the party. Had the Kabul city membership numbered more than 10,000 Babrak likely would have referred to the “tens of thousands” of members. This probable slip-of-the-tongue suggests that total country-wide party membership likely numbered at the time close to 11,000 (8,000 Khalqis and 3,000 Parchamis); certainly, no higher than 35,000-40,000 members plus candidate members.⁷⁰

About half the members in 1982 were in the armed forces, where Khalqis far outnumbered Parchamis.⁷¹ In August 1982 Babrak claimed 20,000 members were in the army and that “the army party organization forms the greatest part of the PDPA.”⁷²

In Kabul in March 1982, according to a Soviet source, the largest concentrations of party members were at the Kabul Polytechnic Institute (600 members) and at Kabul University (1,000 plus members).⁷³

1983 MEMBERSHIP A year later, in 1983, Babrak claimed the party had expanded again to 90,000 full and candidate members, an increase of 35 percent during the year.⁷⁴

One could surmise, therefore, that in 1983 party membership probably ranged from 20,000 to 40,000 full and candidate members.

1984 MEMBERSHIP During 1984 the PDPA boasted that party membership jumped 33 percent, to 120,000 full and candidate members.⁷⁵ Half of this total probably made up candidate members, so the figure could be considered as exaggerated. Actual membership probably was between one-eighth to one-half of the claimed total, somewhere between 7,500 and 30,000 full members. But no matter which figure is believed, it still represented just a tiny fraction of the overall Afghan population.

BACKGROUND OF PARTY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

During 1980-84 the quality of party members deteriorated. Before the 1973 Daoud coup most Khalqi and Parchami members were students or graduates of junior colleges or colleges; many of them were elementary and high school teachers, with a sprinkling of medical doctors and university professors.

After the 1973 coup the *Khalq* faction focused its recruiting on the armed forces, particularly the officer corps, as the most promising vehicle for bringing off a military coup. Within five years this effort had succeeded and the 1978 leftist coup was the result.

Following the 1978 coup, party membership declined, probably as a result of the purge and execution of Parchamis and the mounting unpopularity of the regime.⁷⁶ None but the most blatant opportunist was willing then to join the party ranks.

After the Soviet takeover, however, the party was faced with a desperate need to increase its supporters and decided to lower its entrance requirements. In 1981 the party announced that fewer sponsors and a shorter probationary period (only six months) would be required for full membership.⁷⁷

In its 1981-83 recruiting drives the party welcomed members with little or no education, most of whom apparently were workers in state enterprises and ordinary soldiers in the armed forces. Since most workers, military conscripts, and even noncommissioned officers were functional illiterates, the party membership unquestionably experienced an overall decline in quality.⁷⁸

Official statistics confirm the apparent lowering of the educational level of members. During the 12 months up to April 1981, 25 to 30 percent of new members were said to be "workers, farmers, soldiers, and other toilers"; by 1982 the proportion of "workers and peasants" had risen to 38 percent.⁷⁹

In July 1983 Babrak claimed that 28.4 percent of full members were workers and peasants.⁸⁰

Party membership also was getting younger, a result of the party's special emphasis on recruiting conscripts and youth. By March 1982 the party claimed that "youth and new members" formed more than half its membership.⁸¹ A year later Babrak said that 65 percent of the party were under the age of 30.⁸² The joining process could begin as early as 16 through the National Fatherland Front; full membership could come as early as 18.⁸³

Many new party members probably were motivated by opportunism. In Kabul particularly, party membership brought economic rewards, such as good government jobs, higher pay for being a member, better prospects for promotion, special access to food and consumer goods at cheaper prices, and the opportunity to send one's children for advanced education in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. At the same time party members were well aware that were the Soviets to withdraw, their own security would be in jeopardy. Hence, many PDPA followers also discreetly assisted the resistance. According to one defector up to 40 percent of party members were collaborating with the resistance in some way.⁸⁴

According to a knowledgeable Western newsman, less than 15 percent of party members were convinced communists.⁸⁵

DISINTEREST AND MALAISE IN THE PARTY Quite apart from the divisive effects of party factionalism, other deep-seated problems indicated that the organization was weak and ineffective. In a major speech before the 15th PDPA Plenum on 19 March 1985, Babrak Karmal castigated the party in the following words:

The majority of party members still attach little importance to consistent and serious work among the masses. . . . Their approach is superficial and uninterested.

Little attention is paid to recruiting elders, people of influence, ulema [the mullahs], and religious leaders in the localities, and to publicity work among the people.

Unfortunately, we see in practice serious and crude deviations from the high principles of our party. . . . (They) think only of the privileges and benefits for themselves, their families, and their friends.

The lack of (party) discipline, an irresponsible attitude, the failure to perform work, and the lack of control in party and state remain at a (high) level.

The number of party members in most districts and subdistricts is small.⁸⁶

EFFECT OF RECRUITMENT DRIVE ON KHALQ-PARCHAM RIVALRY

Whether in the course of the 1980-84 recruitment drive the *Khalq* faction experienced a decline in its proportional strength is not clear. In November 1984 a former Ministry of Commerce official claimed that the Parchamis now exceeded the Khalquis in number. He told an interviewer the following:

Parcham had no more than 5,000 when they took over. Because of the length of time they have been in power, unfortunately, they maybe now have five times as many—over 20,000, but less than 30,000. The Khalqis are about half that. The party is demoralized.⁸⁷

Most new party members must have been aware of the rivalry between the two factions and which of the two offered the more promise for advancement. On the other hand, most Afghan emigres and several respected Western scholars believe that party recruiters probably tended to pass on their factional bias. A defecting Afghan army colonel reported in January 1983 that army officers who joined the party normally adhered to the *Khalq* faction.

If ethnic origin was a factor of great importance, this view would help explain this phenomenon. In any case the dominance of the Khalqis in numbers, particularly in the armed forces, likely continued.⁸⁸ For many new members, though, neutrality or fence-

sitting between the two factions must have seemed the prudent course.

PARTY FRONT ORGANIZATIONS AND THE NATIONAL FATHERLAND FRONT

Copying other communist parties, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan from its origin in 1965 had auxiliary organizations aimed at youth, women, workers, writers, academics, and the like. When the party seized power in 1978 these organizations achieved semi-government status but never were particularly active or popular. In many cases, active membership consisted only of persons on the executive committees in Kabul. Often these committees became visible and active only when their counterparts in other Soviet-bloc countries visited Kabul.

The most important auxiliary group was the Democratic Organization of Afghan Youth (DOAY), which claimed a membership of 120,000 (1984).⁸⁹ Its main task seemed to be to recruit future party members.

Next in importance and prominence was the Democratic Organization of Afghan Women (DOAW); it was headed by a Politburo member, Dr. Anahita Ratebzad, and had a claimed membership of 25,000 (1984).⁹⁰

Of less importance were the trade unions, writer groups, peace groups, and academic and clergy organizations, all designed to attract supporters to the regime.

NATIONAL FATHERLAND FRONT Since the front organizations attracted few Afghans, the Babrak regime in 1980 hit on a new scheme to generate wider support. This scheme was the establishment of the National Fatherland Front (NFF). It was announced with great fanfare in Kabul on the first anniversary of the Soviet invasion, and Politburo Secretary Saleh Mohammad Zeary was made its head. Heralded as "the developed and progressive stage of the former *jirgahs* [grand councils],"⁹¹ NFF's purpose was to "unite all the progressive forces" behind the regime.

On paper the NFF was an impressive blanket organization. Twelve organizations were founding members, including the PDPA and all its auxiliary subordinate organizations. The NFF also was to include a "high *jirgah* of tribal representatives," a national body that would help legitimize the NFF and the regime. Finding persons to constitute this tribal *jirgah* proved difficult and apparently accounted for four postponements of the inaugural NFF assembly. When the as-

sembly finally met in June 1981 it was a farce. Due to the absence of genuine tribal representatives, party and government officials were dragooned into wearing tribal dress and masquerading as tribal representatives. Security considerations for the safety of the delegates became so acute that the planned four-day conference ended after just one day.⁹²

Some regretted attending the conference. Resistance forces had threatened reprisals; and after the conference a religious figure from Ghazni and a retired general who had attended were assassinated.

In the months that followed, the NFF became moribund. Although the party and the controlled media devoted much attention to the NFF, it gained few adherents. After a second national meeting in 1982 the NFF began to fade from sight. In April 1984 the *New Times* (Kabul) stated that the NFF had 55,000 members, an astonishingly low figure, since two of the constituent member groups, the PDPA and DOAY, each claimed more members than that.⁹³



WHEN THE SOVIETS INTERVENED IN AFGHANISTAN AND put Babrak Karmal and his *Parcham*-faction colleagues in power, they probably underestimated the difficulties that would ensue in the "new phase of the revolution." One problem that they never managed to overcome was intra-party factionalism. Throughout the period, enmity between the two factions, *Khalq* and *Parcham*, remained unabated. Since an important reason for the difference was ethnic—*Pushtu*-speakers versus *Dari*-speakers—many doubted that the enmity would ever end.

The structure of the PDPA party and the DRA government was modeled after the Soviet Union, but party leaders carefully avoided labeling themselves communist. Rather, they described the DRA government as being in the "national democratic" stage of socialist evolution; this meant in communist jargon that it was partially but not fully "socialist."


The most important leaders of the DRA were those in the nine-member party Politburo, headed by PDPA General Secretary Babrak Karmal. The quality of DRA leadership was not impressive. By standards of pre-1978 Cabinets, the DRA Cabinet Ministers were much less well-educated. A few—such as Communications Minister Watanjar and Interior Minister Gulabzoy—were nearly illiterate. All seemed content or reconciled to be puppets of the Soviet Union.

Politics of the Resistance

Karmal may have the Russians behind him but we have God.

*Hezb-i-Islami spokesman
January 1980*

BACKGROUND

RESIDENT MOHAMMAD DAOUD'S OVERTHROW IN APRIL 1978 came as a surprise to the Afghan public, and to most diplomats. None of the few opposition figures or groups, in or outside Afghanistan, had been considered strong enough to topple him. Most political observers had expected Daoud, who himself had come to power in a 1973 coup, to rule for five-or-so more years and on his departure be succeeded by a relative or perhaps a right wing general. When Western embassies in Kabul had tried to identify possible successors to Daoud, their lists had been short and tentative.

The five years of Daoud's rule, however, had not been entirely tranquil. Five real or alleged coups d'etat had been attempted against him. But none caused more than a political ripple, and all involved moderates or rightists.

As for political exiles outside Afghanistan, none was a serious threat. A handful of fundamentalist Moslem opposition figures lived in Peshawar, Pakistan, and in Western Europe, but most observers dismissed them as being of no consequence. As for ex-King Mohammad Zahir Shah, living quietly in exile in Rome since 1973, no one discerned any interest on his part to return to power. His son-in-law, Prince Abdul Wali, who shared the king's exile in Rome, was a different matter. Some considered this professional soldier, once

the general in charge of the Kabul military region, as ambitious and a potential successor.

Before the 1978 coup, the semi-clandestine leftist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), led by Mohammad Taraki, generally had been considered too small and weak to be a serious threat. Few expected that in traditionalist Moslem Afghanistan a small communist party could seize power or, if it did, could hold power for long. These assumptions were flawed on two counts.

- **First**, the success of the PDPA in penetrating the military and civilian ministries was seriously underrated.

- **Second** was a lack of appreciation that should a coup by pro-Moscow communists succeed, the Soviets would strongly support it.

The 1978 Marxist coup changed the opposition picture. A new and different set of opposition leaders surfaced, both within Afghanistan and abroad. For one, an internal communist opposition within the ruling PDPA party soon developed. Two months after the coup, the stronger of the two PDPA factions, the *Khalq*, turned on the *Parcham* faction and purged its leadership, headed by Babrak Karmal, from the government. The Parchamis then became a leading opposition group. But they were not the only ones, for right-wing opposition groups soon emerged in Pakistan and Iran. During the 20 months the *Khalq* faction ruled Kabul, the Khalqis instigated or were subjected to six purges or coup attempts. In the process, they carried out what later was called a "reign of terror," executing 17,000 suspected opposition persons, including more than 500 *Parcham*-faction members.

After the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December 1979 and installed Babrak Karmal and his *Parcham* faction in power, the prospect of an internal leftist or military coup successfully deposing the Soviet-installed government no longer existed; but the *Khalq-Parcham* feud continued. The presence of 80,000 to 105,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan, including a large Soviet garrison in Kabul, meant that whoever ruled Kabul could be there only with Soviet acquiescence.

Following the 1978 coup and particularly after the 1979 Soviet invasion, the focus of international attention on the opposition shifted to anti-government resistance groups abroad, especially those based

in Peshawar. Later, when resistance leaders emerged within the country, attention also focused on these elements.

ANTI-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION

Almost immediately after the April 1978 coup, resistance groups began to reveal themselves in Peshawar, Pakistan, and in Tehran, Iran. All of them were dedicated to overthrowing the leftist government in Kabul. The groups in Peshawar were the most vociferous and best financed. But well into 1980 their influence hardly radiated beyond the refugee camps in Pakistan or in a few of the border provinces of Afghanistan.¹



MOHAMMAD DAOUD
Strong-man rule as President of Afghanistan, 1973-78; seized power in 1973. Executed in Marxist coup of 27 April 1978.

The resistance groups essentially were aggregations of followers of one or another opposition figure. Few of the organizations offered a clear political program or could really claim a cadre of members or any branches. While some groups advocated democracy for any post-Soviet Afghanistan, the "fundamentalist" Moslem groups aspired to a Khomeini-type revolutionary Islamic republic.

Within Afghanistan, most of the resistance groups were independent guerrilla bands representing a cluster of villages, a valley, a section of a province, or a tribe. Their political motivation was simple: they saw themselves fighting to oust an imperialistic foreign power and to preserve Islam and traditional Afghan ways. As one guerrilla fighter explained to a visiting American newsmen: "we are a guerrilla army fighting for our God, our country."²

During 1978-83 a gradual shakedown was seen in the hundreds of guerrilla groups that sprang up. By the end of 1983 the number of guerrilla groups probably was between 150 and 200; most had specific self-established territorial domains.³ Most units cooperated with

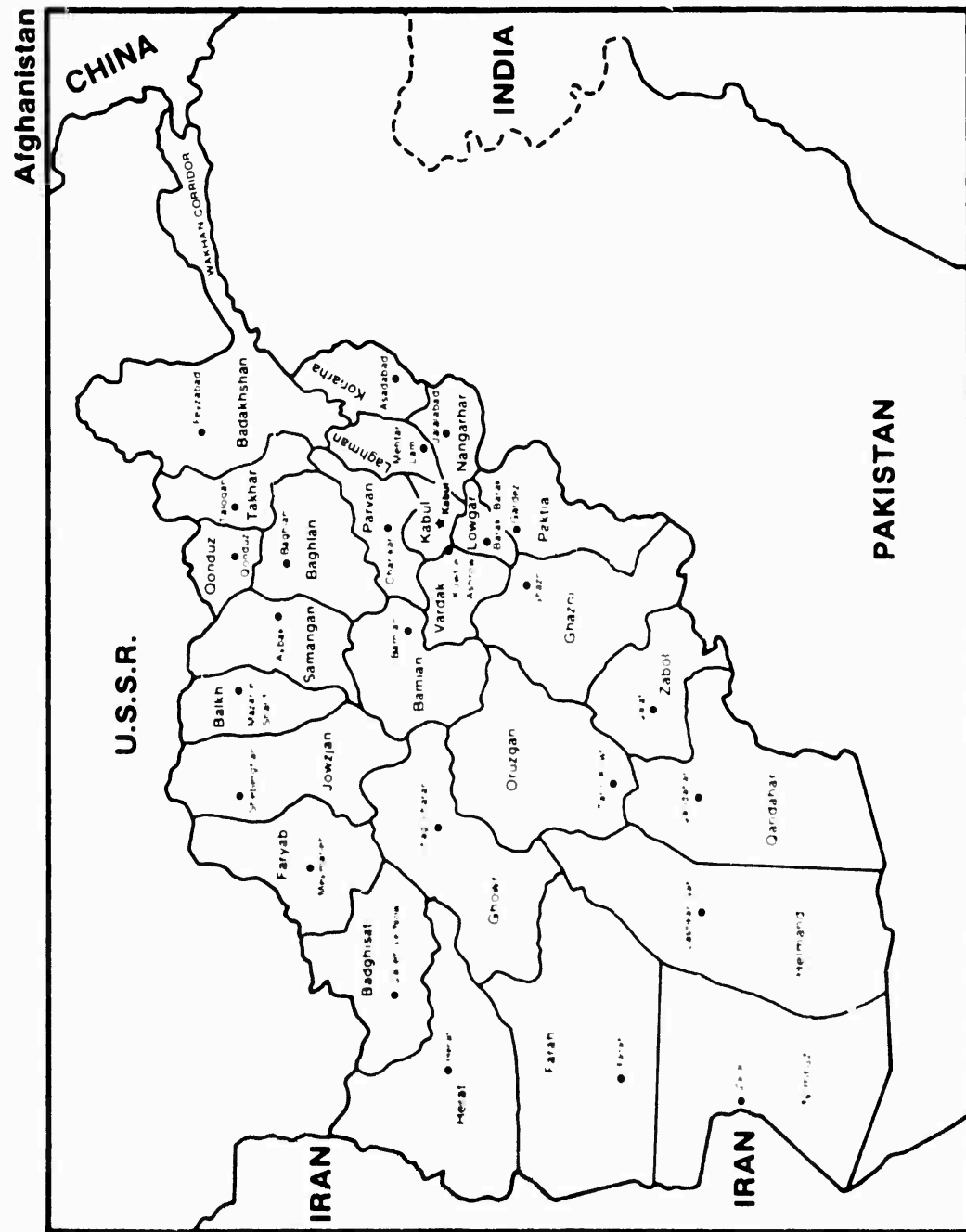
neighboring guerrilla units, but fighting among rival guerrilla bands also occurred as the bands jockeyed to gain ascendancy in particular areas.

A similar shakedown occurred in guerrilla commanders. Some early guerrilla leaders were killed in the fighting, while others had been replaced by local popular will in favor of more promising leaders. In a country with 85 percent illiteracy, almost all of the last- ing guerrilla commanders turned out to be educated men in their late 20s or early 30s, many with some college-level training. In the early years of the resistance (1978-80), their names were little known to the outside world. But by the end of 1984, however, that had changed. The names of virtually all of the more than 150 guerrilla commanders were known; some—like **Ahmed Shah Massoud**—were internationally known figures. Except for the resistance leaders residing in the provinces bordering Pakistan, few ventured outside Afghanistan, much less visited Western Europe or North America.

During 1979-84 some of the major guerrilla organizations established civil administrations in their controlled areas. Notably, this type of administration was set up by guerrilla groups in the tri-province Hazarajat region, in Wardak province, and in the Panjshir Valley in Kapisa province. In such areas, guerrilla organizations established infrastructures of local officials, judicial systems, and some schools and medical facilities. In at least one instance, in Wardak province, a local postal system with stamps was set up. Most organizations, too, had a local tax system and occasionally an extraterritorial one. Said a representative of Massoud's organization: "we charge a 5 percent tax on salaries of all Panjshir (Valley) civil servants working in Kabul; they pay, whether they like it or not, even reportedly cabinet minister Dastagir Panjsheri."⁴

While essentially independent, most internal guerrilla bands found that an affiliation with one of the Peshawar-based organizations was expedient, to have access to arms and other support. An American correspondent, Edward Girardet, who traveled inside Afghanistan reported in 1981:

For the outside observer, the gulf between Afghans inside the country and those in Peshawar is striking. . . . Most resistance groups in the field are obliged to remain affiliated with the



*political organizations. They need both the limited assistance that does come through and a headquarters outside Afghanistan.*⁵

However, few of the resistance commanders expressed much esteem for the Peshawar-based organizations. In June 1981, a local commander in Paktia province who cooperated with one of the Peshawar-based groups told a foreign newsman that "only 1 percent of the people inside Afghanistan belong to any Peshawar-based party."⁶

Another resistance commander told an American newsman in August 1983: "I don't like any of the Afghan leaders in Peshawar. We are not fighting for them. We are fighting for Islam and Afghanistan."⁷

Successful guerrilla commanders, such as Massoud in the Panjshir Valley and Zabiullah in Balkh province, commanded more respect and admiration among Afghans inside and outside the country than did opposition figures residing outside the country. If a single person eventually were to emerge as the opposition's undisputed leader, an Afghan told an American newsman, he would have to be a "fighter" who had earned his laurels within the country.⁸

Said another guerrilla commander: "the ones who will decide (the future of Afghanistan) will not be the leaders sitting in Peshawar, it will be those fighting here in the countryside."⁹

OPPOSITION GROUPS IN PESHAWAR: ATTEMPTS AT UNIFICATION

Barely a month after the April 1978 coup, the world learned of the existence of an organized group dedicated to overthrowing the communist government in Kabul. This group was the National Rescue Front, established in Peshawar by Dr. Syed Burhanuddin Rabbani, a former Islamic law professor at Kabul University. The Front, established in early June 1978, claimed to represent eight right-wing groups and to have the allegiance of 100 of the 374 members of Daoud's last parliament.¹⁰

Within six weeks, however, the Front collapsed. Rivalry among the mushrooming Peshawar-based resistance groups made the Front's success impossible. For the next six and a half years, through 1984,

efforts at unification continued but with mixed success. Coalitions periodically formed, only to collapse and then re-emerge in slightly different shapes. All opposition groups gave lip service to the concept of unity, but few were prepared to sacrifice their independence or aspirations to overall supremacy.

In the early years (1978-1980), three Peshawar-based groups stood out: Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's *Hezb-i-Islam Afghanistan*; Dr. Rabbani's *Jamiat-i-Islami Afghanistan*; and Sayed Ahmad Gailani's *Mahaz-i-Milli Islami*. The first two parties were "fundamentalist" Moslem and not particularly democratically oriented; Gailani's group, on the other hand, was more moderate, more liberalist Moslem, and committed to democracy. Each group claimed numerous followers—for example, Gailani at one time claimed 80 percent of Afghanistan's population—and one group even established a public relations office in Peshawar.

During the early years, hundreds of curious foreign newsmen visited Peshawar to look over the resistance groups. Visitors at one time became so common that Westerners staying at the Peshawar Intercontinental Hotel were greeted by taxi drivers who asked: "you want to visit Gulbuddin, Rabbani, or Gailani?"¹¹ (See Appendix B for biographic information on these personalities and other major Peshawar-based resistance leaders and their organizations.)

By 1983 the pecking order of importance among the dozen-or-so Peshawar-based groups or parties had changed. Gulbuddin's *Hezb* group, at first considered the largest and most important organization, had dropped to perhaps third place in terms of affiliated partisan groups in Afghanistan. Some of his rivals accused him of being more interested in fighting them than the Kabul regime and the Soviets. Replacing Gulbuddin's party in first place, in commanding the most affiliations with guerrilla bands in Afghanistan, was a politically moderate party, Nabi Mohammadi's *Harakat-i-Enqilab-i-Islami*; the honor of second place went to Rabbani's *Jamiat*. Gailani, although widely admired in the West, had, like Gulbuddin, also lost ground internally in Afghanistan; however, some Afghans charged that despite his grandiose claims he had never had much internal support.

Each of the Peshawar-based parties aspired to primacy and hoped newsmen and sympathetic foreign organizations would be impressed by their claims of Afghan support. But the foreign press tended instead to be skeptical about the effectiveness of the exile

groups and to highlight the disunity among them. Few foreign newsmen found the self-styled Peshawar leaders impressive. An Arab correspondent wrote:

*The striking thing is that I searched among all the Afghan leaders for a personality characteristic of a "true leader," but I did not find one. All the faces were cold, all the eyes were pallid, and the smiles did not communicate.*¹²

Soon after the demise of the National Rescue Front, the Peshawar-based groups were pressured to make another try at unification. Prominent Afghans in exile, along with foreign groups and governments willing to support the resistance, all urged unification. So on 24 September 1978 a second merger attempt was made. Gulbuddin's *Hezb-i-Islami* and Rabbani's *Jamiat-i-Islami* formed a united front called the Movement of Islamic Revolution. The catalyst was a reported Arab offer of \$2 million in aid. This second merger attempt, however, lasted only a few months.¹³ Intense rivalry among the leaders in exile and the expectation that foreign aid would continue without unification led to its demise.

In fact, any prospect of unification probably was unrealistic before December 1979, when the Soviets invaded the country. Since the Taraki- and Amin-led governments in Kabul were fast alienating the general populace and gradually losing administrative control of the countryside, each resistance party saw itself as a viable political successor to the leftist government in the near future. Consequently, the concern of each group was to create the image, both inside Afghanistan and abroad, that it alone had the greatest claim to legitimacy.

The hopes of 1978-79, that the leftist Kabul government would collapse and be replaced by a non-communist government led by one or more of the Peshawar-based leaders, suffered a terminal setback with the Soviet invasion. The imperatives for unification now became more intense than ever. As one resistance leader expressed it: "if we cannot unite among ourselves, how can we fight a superpower?"¹⁴

RENEWED ATTEMPTS AT UNIFICATION AFTER THE SOVIET INVASION

A third attempt at unification was tried, less than two weeks after the Soviet invasion. Again, an important stimulus was an offer of

millions of dollars of Islamic aid, this time brought to Peshawar by Salem Azzam, the visiting Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference in Europe. As a result, the six main Peshawar-based parties quickly agreed—in principle—to establish a coalition. These six parties were led respectively by: Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Burhanuddin Rabbani, Yunis Khalis, Ahmad Gailani, Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, and Sibghatullah Al-Mojadeddi.

However, after only two negotiating sessions, Gulbuddin's *Hezb-i-Islami* group withdrew. Gulbuddin claimed that since his organization had the largest following among Afghans, it should be given primacy of place in the alliance. He also objected to the membership of two moderate groups, led respectively by Gailani and Mojadeddi. When the others refused his demands Gulbuddin backed out.¹⁵

After Gulbuddin withdrew, the remaining five parties agreed, on 27 January 1980, to a loose coalition called the Islamic Alliance for the Liberation of Afghanistan. They did this for two reasons: to qualify for the offer of Islamic aid, and to win international support for the Afghan opposition cause from the upcoming Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference, to be held in Islamabad, Pakistan, in May 1980. The Alliance hoped to receive conference endorsement as the Afghan government-in-exile.

But the Alliance was only partly successful. Before the conference, the Alliance spokesman, Abd-i-Rab Rasoul Sayaf, was allowed to make a statement before the political committee of the conference. But so also was Gulbuddin. The Iranian government, in a political gesture of support, made Sayaf, along with the heads of each of the five Alliance member groups, part of the Iranian delegation to the conference. But they were not the only Afghan members of the delegation; two representatives from one or two Iran-based resistance groups also were there.¹⁶

The meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Islamic Conference, attended by 39 countries, condemned the Soviet invasion and called for the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops. But the meeting did not go so far as to urge diplomatic recognition of the Alliance as the Afghan government-in-exile. This refusal was hardly surprising, given the fragile nature of the coalition and the absence of Gulbuddin's group. Earlier in January, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, in an emergency meeting, had suspended

Afghanistan's membership; the conference also had called on member states to withhold diplomatic recognition of the "illegal regime" in Kabul.

Curiously, when the Alliance was formed in January 1980, a parallel and totally different fourth effort at unification also was attempted. Membership in this proposed resistance organization was to consist of representatives from each district in Afghanistan and representatives from the six Peshawar-based groups. A grand council meeting of these representatives, a *Loya Jirgah*, was to be held in Peshawar on the eve of the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference. The grand council hoped to proclaim a prospective government-in-exile.¹⁷

Mohammad Omar Babrakzai, a former Afghan chief justice and one-time adviser to President Daoud, was the organizer. Ahmad Gailani, one of the best known Peshawar resistance leaders, was an active behind-the-scenes supporter. Under this fourth scheme at unification, each of Afghanistan's more than 250 districts was to send three representatives to the *Loya Jirgah*. The six Peshawar-based parties were given until May 22—the last day of the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference—to renounce their independence and join the new movement. As an inducement, each party was offered seven seats on the 110-member Revolutionary Council; this group was to be the executive body of what was hoped would be the government-in-exile.

Two of the six groups, including Gailani's, initially indicated a willingness to join; but in the end none joined. The other four from the first had ignored the *Loya Jirgah* invitation. They resented Gailani's alleged effort to stack the convocation in his favor and denounced it as unrepresentative.¹⁸

Though some 916 tribesmen made their way to the meeting, held in Peshawar on 10 May 1980, the new organization never got off the ground. Its elected president, Hassan Gailani, a nephew of Ahmad Gailani, was not invited to appear before the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference. On 29 July 1980 the Council of the *Loya Jirgah* announced its intention to set up a provisional government in an area of Afghanistan under resistance control, but nothing came of it. The Council soon faded away.¹⁹

PESHAWAR GROUPS FORM TWO COALITIONS

After the May 1980 Islamic Conference, the five-member Alliance soon foundered. Ideological and personal differences between the moderates and the fundamentalists proved intractable. The Alliance chairman, Rasoul Sayaf, a fundamentalist, constantly criticized the moderates in public; they in turn accused him of misappropriating Alliance funds. By December 1980 the Alliance had collapsed; in April 1981 it formally was dissolved.

Imperatives for unification, however, remained. So in the summer of 1981 two new separate coalitions were announced. They were popularly described in the West as the "Moderates" and "Fundamentalists." Since each had the same formal name, *Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahidin*, the two also were sometimes identified as the Unity of Three and the Unity of Six (later Seven).

Both coalitions shared mutual goals of eliminating the leftist government in Kabul and evicting the Soviets from Afghanistan; but they were deeply divided on other issues.

- The Moderates sought a democratically elected government in Afghanistan, were willing to have ex-King Zahir Shah play a leading resistance role, and welcomed contacts and aid from the West.

- The Fundamentalists sought a Khomeini-type Islamic government and opposed any role for the former royal family; some members, like Gulbuddin, were openly anti-West.

The bitterness between the two rival coalitions was exemplified by a statement of Gulbuddin to an interviewer in December 1982: "two alliances do not exist. We know of only one alliance, ours. . . . Those who are outside it will either perish or be compelled to join it."²⁰

THE MODERATES (UNITY OF THREE)

The coalition of the Moderates consisted of the political parties of Ahmad Gailani, Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, and Sibghatullah Mojadeddi.

1) *Mahaz-i-Milli Islami* (National Islamic Front; leader, Sayed Ahmad Gailani). Gailani came from a respected Islamic religious family. His organization had an ethnic Pushtun cast, with support in half-a-dozen southern border provinces. While Gailani's democratic,

nationalist views earned him admiration and some support from the West, he did not have a reputation as an effective organizer. By the end of 1983 his influence appeared to be waning.²¹

2) *Harakat-i-Enqilab-i-Islami* (Islamic Revolutionary Movement; leader, Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi). This party probably possessed the largest number of affiliated guerrilla bands in Afghanistan, in part because of its political flexibility. But its affiliated guerrilla bands had no common clear ideology. The party also was poorly organized; some of its affiliated bands were successfully penetrated and subverted by the Kabul secret police, KHAD. Nabi Mohammadi was a former member of the Afghan parliament and was a widely respected figure.²²

3) *Jabha-i-Milli Nijat* (National Liberation Front; leader, Sibghatullah Al-Mojadeddi). Among the Moderates, this party had the smallest number of affiliated guerrilla bands in Afghanistan. Mojadeddi was highly regarded as an Islamic scholar and commanded considerable political influence. The party was traditional, Pushtun, and not well organized.²³

The charter of the Moderate coalition called for essentially three things: liberation of the country from the domination of Soviet invaders and communist atheism; establishment of the Islamic system; and an elected Islamic government.²⁴ While the Moderates indicated that they never would hold discussions with the Babrak government, the coalition did not rule out negotiations with the Soviets through indirect channels.²⁵

When it was established in June 1981, the Moderate coalition saw itself as an interim organization until a comprehensive resistance organization representing all of Afghanistan could be formed. Meanwhile, the three constituent parties stated that they would unite their military activities in the field and pool their financial resources. However, they never fully did so. Western military assistance was welcomed, provided such aid was granted without conditions.²⁶

The coalition claimed to be the "predominant *mujahidin* (Islamic fighter) organization" representing "more than 70 percent of Afghanistan's pre-war population of 17 million people."²⁷

In the Afghan community in the West, the Moderate coalition had many well-wishers. But critics charged that its leaders were succumbing to corruption. The three leaders or their relatives were said

to have used donations to invest in real estate, fleets of cars, and businesses in Peshawar. Leaders of the Fundamentalist coalition (see below) also sometimes were charged with corruption—particularly the chairman, Sayaf—but the Fundamentalists were less tainted in this regard than the Moderates.

THE FUNDAMENTALISTS (UNITY OF SIX—LATER SEVEN)

Two months after the Moderates organized their coalition, the Fundamentalists established (in August 1981) their alliance with the same name, *Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahidin*. Its main leaders also were familiar figures: Rabbani, Gulbuddin, Sayaf, and Junis Khalis.

The main “newcomer” was Gulbuddin, who after refusing to join the earlier Alliance of January 1980 now agreed to associate with the new Fundamentalist grouping. His change of heart was due in part to the non-membership of the Moderates, for whom he had little use; in addition, his refusal to join the earlier Alliance had been widely criticized by Afghans as retarding the resistance cause and had hurt his image. A further factor was that Gulbuddin could no longer sustain his claim that his organization had the support of most Afghans inside the country. In March 1982 the Fundamentalist coalition was expanded from six to seven members. The seven member groups were as follows:

1) *Jamiat-i-Islami* (Islamic Society; leader, Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani). Mainly *Tajik* in ethnic composition, *Jamiat* was preeminent among guerrilla bands in the northern belt of provinces stretching from Badakhshan province in the northeast to Herat province in the northwest. It was relatively well organized and included some of Afghanistan’s most effective guerrilla commanders, such as Ahmed Shah Massoud (Panjshir Valley), Zabiullah (Balkh province), and Ismael Khan (Herat). Throughout 1982-83 *Jamiat* grew in strength among guerrilla groups. The party sought to establish an Iranian-style Islamic revolutionary government in Kabul, but without Khomeini’s fanatic element.²⁸

2) *Hezb-i-Islami* (Islamic Party; leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar). This organization once had the reputation as being Afghanistan’s best organized and cost effective resistance organization. By 1982 its influence and prestige were waning, in part because *Hezb*-affiliated guerrilla bands often were accused of fighting rival guerrilla groups. Gulbuddin was the most controversial figure of the Peshawar-based

resistance leaders; many leaders disliked him, while others championed him. Politically, he was the most radical Moslem revolutionary of the Peshawar figures and clearly was anti-West. Until 1983 his organization appeared to enjoy more Arab and Pakistani support than any other group.²⁹

3) *Hezb-i-Islami* (Islamic Party; leader, Yunis Khalis). This breakaway faction of Gulbuddin's party (and with the same name) was much smaller than either of the above organizations. It was mainly a military group with guerrilla units operating principally in two provinces, Nangarhar and Kabul.³⁰

4) *Itihad-i Islami Baraye Azadi Afghanistan* (Islamic Union for Liberation of Afghanistan; leader, Abd-i-Rab Rasoul Sayaf). A forceful individual, Sayaf had been chairman of the 1980-81 Alliance and, after the formation of the Fundamentalists coalition, became the coalition's chairman. Like Gulbuddin, he was strongly in favor of an Iranian-type revolutionary Islamic government and was anti-West. In Afghanistan, Sayaf had only a small number of guerrilla affiliates.³¹

5) *Harakat-i-Enqilab Islami* (Islamic Revolutionary Movement; leader, Nassrallah Mansour). In 1981 Mansour broke away from Nabi Mohammadi's *Harakat* organization and claiming the same name joined the Unity of Seven. In 1983 he had little influence and had only about two affiliated guerrilla groups in northern Afghanistan.

6) *Harakat-i-Enqilab Islami* (Islamic Revolutionary Movement; leader, Rafiullah al-Mousin). Like Mansour, Mousin also left the original *Harakat* in 1981 but still claimed the same name. Mousin also had a negligible following.

7) *The Islamic Front or National Liberation Front* (Leader, Mohammad Mir). Mir was a defector from Mojadeddi's Moderate party; like Mansour and Mousin, Mir had few followers and no known affiliated guerrilla bands.

Critics of the Fundamentalist coalition (or Unity of Seven) pointed out that three of its alleged member groups really were not groups at all but dissident individuals from the Moderate parties, with few if any affiliated partisan bands. Therefore, they said, the term "Unity of Seven" was a misnomer. The term suggested that the Fundamentalists were larger than they really were, so the Moderates charged. Consequently, members of the Unity of Three refused to refer to the Fundamentalist coalition as a grouping of seven.

Under terms of the original merger agreement of August 1981, leadership of the Fundamentalist coalition was to rotate monthly among the six organizations; each was to have equal representation on the government council. Most important, each organization was to close its office in Peshawar and hand over its assets to the unified body.³² This latter step, however, was not taken.

Two years later, in May 1983, the Fundamentalist coalition attempted a closer merger. The then-seven members reaffirmed their intentions to dissolve their separate existences and to transfer their resources to the unified body.³³ Instead of a rotating president, one person, Rasoul Sayaf, was elected president for two years. Sayaf told newsmen that the groups in the Unity of Seven would now fight under one command, fighting would be stepped up, and fighting strategy would be changed.³⁴

This pronouncement was greeted with skepticism, as rivalry and fighting between affiliated guerrilla groups continued. In fact, most of the clashes in Afghanistan between rival partisan groups occurred between Gulbuddin and Rabbani-affiliated bands, notwithstanding that Gulbuddin and Rabbani belonged to the same coalition. The May 1983 Unity of Seven accord indicated an intention to cooperate more closely, but little changed. Explained a Fundamentalist coalition spokesman: "our Unity of Seven organization is complete legally, but for practical completion it is in need of time."³⁵

Part of the problem was ongoing tension among the principal leaders. Khalis and Rabbani often were at odds with Sayaf and Gulbuddin; the latter two reportedly did not get along well with each other. In November 1983 Khalis very nearly bolted from the coalition, leading coalition members to make a public appeal to him to remain.

That Khalis and other disgruntled members did not depart was due largely to financial considerations. These members feared that a substantial amount of outside aid, such as from the Pakistani organization *Jamaat-i-Islam*, might not continue for a particular member organization were it to leave the coalition. Outside aid for the Unity of Seven was more generous from 1981 to 1983 than for the Unity of Three.³⁶

THE EXILED ROYAL FAMILY

After the April 1978 leftist coup, speculation was widespread that ex-King Mohammad Zahir Shah might become the focal point of the resistance. He was, after all, the principal living symbol of 140 years of traditional Muhammadzai family rule over Afghanistan, though as king he had earned the reputation of being weak and ineffective. Zahir was born in 1915; he was tall, slim, diffident, and serious in manner. Residing in Rome since his exile in 1973, Zahir did not immediately offer his services to the resistance cause. During his years in exile he had become something of a recluse, refusing requests for interviews and seemingly content to raise flowers, read, and play chess. Between his ouster in 1973 and the 1978 coup he had met his living expenses from a modest honorarium received from his cousin, President Mohammad Daoud, who had deposed him. After the leftists stopped his honorarium, Zahir received a stipend from the Shah of Iran; after the Shah's downfall Zahir obtained a living allowance from the Saudi royal family.¹⁷

Following the leftist takeover in 1978, some Afghans hoped the king would stir himself and lead the resistance. Instead, the king initially did nothing, choosing only to repeat his often stated position: that he did not seek his throne back, and would support a restoration of the monarchy only if Afghans rejected a republic in a nation-wide referendum. Later, in November 1980, the king became more assertive. His spokesman and son-in-law, Prince Abdul Wali, told the Associated Press that "the King is a patriot at the service of his people



AP Wire World Photo

EX-KING ZAHIR SHAH

Exiled to Rome in 1973; seen as a possible focal point of the resistance; the last years of the monarchy were 1965-73.

and his nation." The prince did not rule out the king's playing some resistance role.³⁸

Prince Abdul Wali himself was more forthright about his own availability for a resistance leadership role. He had been educated at Sandhurst and, before his ouster in 1973, had been the Kabul region military commander with the rank of major general. Wali told Flora Lewis of *The New York Times* on 3 May 1980: "I am always at the disposal of my people. I'm a soldier by profession."³⁹ While the king attracted some supporters, the prince, however, seemingly had none. His critics accused him of being unscrupulous and having limited ability; they claimed that he attained the rank of major general only because of family connections. Some charged him as being a liability for the royal family.

Thus, during the early years of the resistance (1978-81) few Afghans were enthusiastic about bringing the king or prince into a resistance role. A common view of the king and royal family was expressed by an Afghan exile as follows:

*I for one cannot accept him. The king is why we have communism. He kept the people poor, and that is the breeding ground for communism. This king of ours and his friends ruled for 40 years, and he gave us only jails, poverty, illiteracy, and ultimately a rule that has made us all homeless.*⁴⁰

Whether or not the king could play a useful role, some Afghans also doubted that he had the will or energy to act as a leader. The king was described by some exiles as "well-meaning but lazy" and "lacking dynamism." He was 70 in 1984 and suffered from rheumatism.⁴¹ Yet as the Soviet occupation continued, opposition to the king lessened. With no other resistance figure commanding universal enthusiasm, the idea of the king playing a unifying role became more attractive. As one guerrilla commander expressed it:

*The people of Afghanistan need a leader. Everybody wants Zahir Shah because he is all we have. The Peshawar leaders don't think so, but they have failed us.*⁴²

RENEWED EFFORT TO UNIFY THE RESISTANCE

Starting in 1981, more pressure was exerted on the king to assert himself. In October 1981 he was prevailed on to declare his "solidarity with the Afghan people."⁴³ Finally, two years later, on 22 June 1983, he offered his services. He told *Le Monde* (Paris) that he really wished to help unite the Afghan resistance against the Soviet military occupation. On 11 July 1983 he issued an open letter to all Afghans stating: "with no expectation of any special status or title, I am ready to join in a united effort (for) . . . the restoration of a free, independent, and Islamic Afghanistan."⁴⁴

The king's offer of leadership was the culmination of two years of negotiation among members of his family, political leaders from the days of the monarchy, and members of the Moderate Unity of Three coalition.⁴⁵ Following the king's offer, a delegation from the Unity of Three paid him a visit in mid-August. As a result of the visit the king agreed to take part (as the initial chairman) in a single national United Front to be established by a new *Loya Jirgah* or national assembly.⁴⁶

While some exiled Afghans welcomed the king's leadership offer, others stated that the king was still too discredited to be of help. Those in favor of the king's playing a particular role argued that he still enjoyed more respect than any other resistance leader. Not a few Afghans looked back on the relatively liberal last years of the monarchy (1968-73) as the golden age of modern-day Afghanistan. Those in favor of a United Front argued that the Front would rejuvenate Afghan morale and have a beneficial impact on the international scene. As it was, the resistance was not remotely close to offering a credible alternative government-in-exile to the Soviet-backed Kabul regime for a seat in the UN General Assembly. Speaking on behalf of the Unity of Three coalition, Mojadeddi stated: "about 80 percent of the Afghans had welcomed Zahir Shah's offer, and this was because they were fed up with the existing parties."⁴⁷

Unremitting opposition to the king, however, came from the Fundamentalists and some others. Rasoul Sayaf, chairman of the Unity of Seven, rejected the idea of convening a national assembly chaired by the king. Disparaging the Moderates who had welcomed the new initiative, he warned that if the king returned to Afghanistan he would be killed the moment he set foot on Afghan soil.⁴⁸

Gulbuddin of the *Hezb* reportedly also let out word that should the king come to Peshawar he would have him killed. Gulbuddin reiterated the charge that the king and his relatives were to blame for the communists coming to power. In central Afghanistan, a representative of a small politically radical resistance group, in talking with a Swedish correspondent, scoffed at a possible resistance role for the king, saying: "he (the king) belongs to history, not to the future."⁴⁹

Those who favored a new *Loya Jirgah* (national assembly) leading to a United Front, with the king playing a catalytic role, nevertheless still persisted. Hodayoun Shah Assefi, an ex-Afghan diplomat and brother-in-law of the king, traveled to Pakistan in late 1983 to consult resistance organizations and the Pakistan government about the proposal. Except from Gulbuddin and Sayaf, he felt he received an encouraging response. The yearning for unity was general, he found. This feeling was well expressed by a Wardak province guerrilla commander as follows:

*The disunity among the (Peshawar) leaders, their private conflicting concerns and personal ambitions are very depressing for the fighters; it is demoralizing them. I pray for this situation to change.*⁵⁰

While Assefi was in Pakistan, a group of respected and highly educated Afghan exiles drafted a charter for the proposed United Front. This charter provided for a parliament, an executive council, a presidency, and a judiciary. Under the charter, the king would play a symbolic figure-head role. Zahir had made clear that he had no aspirations to dominate or control the national assembly or United Front.

Enthusiasts like Assefi now were prepared to move ahead with the *Loya Jirgah*, but formidable problems remained. The fact that influential Fundamentalists opposed it represented the main constraint. Two other problems were: the location of the convocation, with Saudi Arabia—which had broken off diplomatic relations with Afghanistan—the preferred venue; and financing. If attendance meant foreign travel for the delegates and lasted 10-15 days, a 600-delegate *Loya Jirgah* probably would cost more than \$1 million.⁵¹

As of 1985 nothing had come of the proposal. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia both were critically important to the concept. But whether they were prepared to support it was not clear.

AN AFGHAN GOVERNMENT IN EXILE?

Since early 1980 the idea of establishing a provisional government-in-exile, either abroad or on Afghan soil, often was discussed among resistance leaders. In May 1980 the five-member Islamic Alliance unsuccessfully had sought diplomatic recognition from the Islamic Conference as the exile government. Thereafter, though the issue often was hotly discussed among resistance groups, no such government was ever announced. Proponents of the 1983 proposal for a new *Loya Jirgah* or United Front hoped that it would lead to such a provisional government. Three difficulties hampered the idea.

- First, the deep divisions in the resistance movement seemed to create an insuperable obstacle to the establishment of a single body that would represent virtually all resistance groups.

- Second, a government-in-exile needed a base abroad, and that meant permission from some friendly foreign government. Locating a provisional government on Afghan soil was considered, but discarded as impractical. The Soviets, with their military superiority, could capture any place they pleased in Afghanistan. Hence, if a provisional government were established on Afghan soil, it likely would be chased from its location as soon as it raised its banner.

- Last, a government-in-exile needed financial support, and that again required foreign government help. Egyptian President Sadat had indicated a willingness to harbor an Afghan government-in-exile before he was assassinated, but his demise ended that possibility.

A COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH THE KABUL REGIME?

Neither the resistance nor the DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) expressed any interest in forming a coalition government. The resistance groups in Peshawar considered the Babrak Karmal government illegitimate and declared their determination never to negotiate with it. Babrak reciprocated these views. When asked at a news conference in Moscow in December 1982 whether his government would accept a coalition with the insurgents, he scoffed at the idea, saying: "Afghanistan has no tradition of compromising with gangsters."⁵²

PAKISTAN LIMITS THE NUMBER OF RECOGNIZED RESISTANCE GROUPS

In early 1981, the Pakistan government took a step that consolidated the status of the principal resistance groups based in Pakistan; this move had the effect of freezing out minor groups, such as *Afghan Mellat*. The Pakistan government declared that henceforth it would recognize only six Pakistan-based resistance organizations: the three parties in the Moderate coalition (those led by Ahmad Gailani, Nabi Mohammadi, and Mojadeddi); and three from the Fundamentalist coalition (those led by Rabbani, Gulbuddin, and Khalis). Only the six recognized parties could register Afghan refugees and operate schools in the refugee camps; more importantly, only the six groups could funnel arms and other material support to guerrilla groups inside Afghanistan. A guerrilla commander in Nimruz province complained: "we are unfortunately forced to join these parties in order to get weapons."⁵³

This decision of the Pakistan government led to a scramble by the six parties to sign up guerrilla bands in Afghanistan. Envoys were sent into the country to line up affiliations. By 1982 almost every guerrilla band was affiliated with one of the approved Peshawar-based organizations. As a result, by 1983 almost every one of Afghanistan's 28 provinces had at least three Peshawar-based organizations represented; and some, like Kabul and Kunar provinces, had as many as six. (See Appendix C for a list of guerrilla group affiliations by province in 1983.)

The affiliations revealed interesting sociological and cultural patterns. If one Peshawar group signed up a guerrilla band that represented the traditional local establishment power structure, then the other local guerrilla bands representing anti-establishment or minority elements would sign up with other Peshawar parties. In most cases, the Peshawar parties did not really control the guerrilla groups affiliated with them. Among the Moderate Unity of Three parties, only a few hundred fighters based in Pakistan itself were firmly controlled. Among the Fundamentalists in the Unity of Seven coalition, only Gulbuddin and Khalis seemed to have groups inside Afghanistan that took firm direction.

Many of the affiliations were based on ethnic and tribal affinities or personal connections, while other affiliations were purely due to expediency. In fact, often little political relationship existed between

the guerrilla band and its erstwhile Peshawar-based supporter. This fact repeatedly was borne out by the pattern of local cooperation and in-fighting among guerrilla bands. Many instances occurred of nominally moderate and fundamentalist groups cooperating closely in the field, while their counterparts in Peshawar were at bitter odds. More striking yet, many instances existed of bands fighting each other, while their supporting organizations in Peshawar belonged to the same coalition.

The relationship, too, between the essentially independent guerrilla bands and their affiliated Peshawar-based groups often was strained. This strain usually was due to complaints by the bands about inadequate support from their Peshawar supporters. Some switching of affiliations therefore occurred. Partisan groups in Afghanistan's center, north, and west tended to be less well supported than those based in provinces adjacent to or near Pakistan. A donkey-train of supplies could take a month to reach Badakhshan or Faryab provinces adjacent to the Soviet Union. On the way, the supplies risked being seized by guerrilla groups through whose territories the caravans moved.

After about a year Pakistan modified its policy of recognizing just six resistance organizations. By April 1983 Pakistan had expanded the recognized list to 11 groups. The five newcomers were: two Hazara regional groups, the *Shura* and Maqsoudi's Union of Islamic Fighters, both of which had refused to affiliate with the two Peshawar coalitions; and the three minor members of the Unity of Seven coalition.⁵⁴

RESISTANCE GROUPS IN IRAN

Although the Peshawar-based exile groups overshadowed all others in world attention, three Afghan resistance groups had offices in Qum, Iran. These groups were:

- (1) The Afghanistan Islamic Movement Association, led by a Hazara named Mohamed Asif Mohseni.
- (2) The *Al-Nasr* (Victory) group, headed by Mir Hoseyn Sadequi.
- (3) The *Shura*.

Mohseni was present at the May 1980 Islamic Conference meeting in Islamabad as part of the Iranian delegation. In Tehran in late 1983 an alleged joint headquarters of Afghan Islamic resistance organizations existed. This group helped organize political demonstrations for the resistance movement.

The first of the above three groups, also sometimes calling itself the Islamic Society of Afghanistan, is thought to have given an interview in August 1979 to a Western newsman in Tehran. Its representative, calling himself Tekouli (probably an alias), was vague about the group's aims or activities. He said it wanted a "government of the poor people, of the Islamic people." The resistance group visualized a future Afghanistan that gave land to the peasants, nationalized major industry and finance (already nationalized during the Daoud period), promoted a free press, and had a foreign policy that supported oppressed people everywhere.⁵⁵

Activities of the Iran-connected organizations in Afghanistan were little known. Up to 1981, Iranian support had been more verbal than material. Then in 1981 or 1982 the Khomeini government began to provide some material assistance, including arms, to the Hazarajat-based *Al Nasr*. When the Khomeini government offered to do the same for other resistance groups, including Massoud's in the Panjshir Valley, the offer was rebuffed because of political conditions requiring support for Iran's foreign policy. What then happened is best described by the following account of a French reporter in 1983:

The Iranians consider the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the most favorable situation for the consolidation and extension of their influence in the country. In the beginning they decided to help all the Hazara groups without discrimination. When it did not work according to their wishes, they changed their policy and decided to federate the groups under the umbrella of one organization, Nasr, a party which they found the best organized. Nasr, founded in 1980, is the amalgamation of two parties . . . the Iranians gave their support to Nasr which had established strong bases. . . .

But last year (1982) the Iranians sent a delegation to Hazarajat in order to investigate the activities of Nasr and to see how their military and financial help was being used. The Iranians were deeply disappointed and convinced that it was impossible to

*accomplish anything with the Afghan parties. Then they decided to operate through their own Iranian party inside Afghanistan and created the Sepah-e-Pasdaran; it has the same structure and the same organization as the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Party, only the members are Afghans. This year Nasr is losing its strength fast and Sepah-e-Pasdaran is receiving all the assistance. But for the ordinary Hazara, there is little difference between Nasr and Sepah.*⁵⁶

As of 1985 little was known about *Sepah* or the reported decline of *Nasr*.

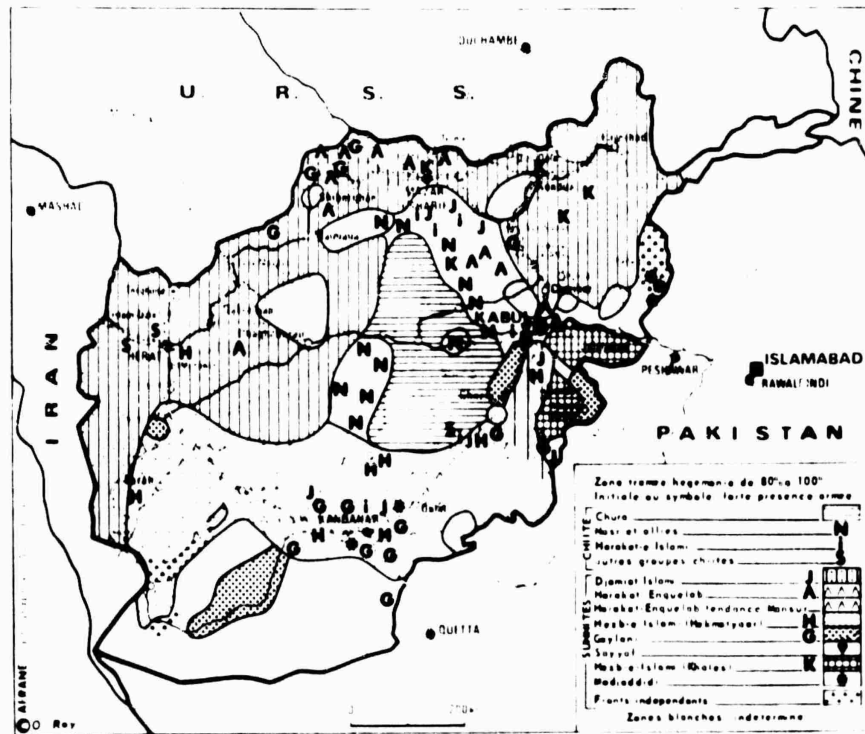
THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT WITHIN AFGHANISTAN

During the year and a half of insurgency before the Soviet intervention, the outside world gradually became aware that a growing number of guerrilla bands was forming inside Afghanistan—but little was known about them. In fact, until a year after the Soviet invasion few foreign observers could name more than four guerrilla groups and their commanders. Most of the guerrilla bands were local, with their commanders changing often. (See maps on the following page.)

Typical of these local leaders were the three described below by visiting foreign correspondent Jere Van Dyk in 1981:⁵⁷

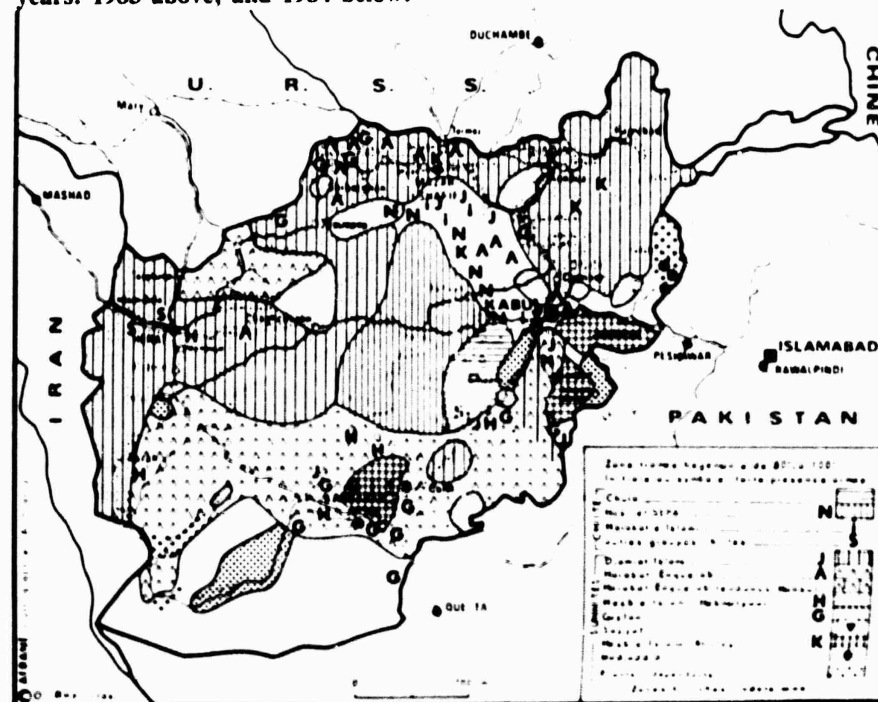
- “(There were) men like **Abdul Shukor** (in Paktia province), who thinks he is about 25 years old although he looks like a handsome man of 40. . . . He became a teacher and then the headmaster at a village elementary school. . . . The 50 men with whom he has lived and fought for the last year respect him first of all because . . . it is his job to direct mortar fire and tune into enemy communications on his cheap portable radio. . . . His ability to read and write give him status. He also is different from many of the others because he laughs a great deal. . . .”

- “**Khoudai-dad Shahazai**, a wiry man with a handlebar mustache, is another fighter who is respected. . . . He fights with a group in Kandahar province and seemingly lives on hashish. . . . A Soviet bullet is lodged in his belly and there is shrapnel in his right leg. His eyes are often bloodshot but still his gaze pierces whomever he talks



Maps courtesy AIRANI

These maps show resistance-held areas in Afghanistan during two contrasting years: 1983 above, and 1984 below.



to. He wears two leather bandoleers crisscrossed on his chest and a shiny Soviet officer's pistol in a hip holster. Unlike Mr. Shukor, the teacher, he says he loves war and that he is afraid of no one, and his comrades say they believe him. Before the war he owned a small shop. . . . His comrades tell with awe of the day he sneaked through the thick defenses of the airfield near Kandahar, where large Soviet units reportedly are based, and shot out the tires of a Soviet transport plane while it was being unloaded. . . ."

● "Sadul Den is 22 years old . . . and is clearly precocious. He conveys self-confidence. . . . His family owns vineyards . . . and the young man himself owns a Honda motorcycle. On the morning of what was to be the most serious fighting in three years, he never raised his voice but inspired confidence as the battle became more threatening. With not enough rifles to go around, he gave his Kalashnikov to someone else and set out with only a Soviet pistol. By the end of the long day of fighting he had taken another pistol and another automatic rifle from the Afghan government forces (DRA). . . ."

AHMED SHAH MASSOUD OF THE PANJSHIR VALLEY

In late 1981, a year after the Soviet invasion, a few names of guerrilla leaders came to the attention of the outside world. The best known was **Ahmed Shah Massoud**, the young guerrilla commander of the Panjshir Valley in Kapisa province. His success in repulsing six Soviet and DRA army attacks on his 60-mile-long valley gained him wide respect and the nickname of "Lion of the Panjshir."

Foreign correspondents, who trekked into the Panjshir and met Massoud in 1981 and 1983, described him as follows:

—A bright but modest former engineering student. . . Massoud has displayed such leadership and knowledge of guerrilla warfare that he has earned a reputation here in Afghanistan not unlike that of Che Guevara.⁵⁸

—I wouldn't be surprised if in all of Afghanistan, the Russians fear—I mean truly fear—only one man: Massoud. He represents the best hope for the country, the best hope of developing a movement that can restore Afghan independence.⁵⁹

—Two impressions were reinforced in the two days we were to spend with him. One was of a truly wholehearted devotion and trust with which he inspired everyone who came in contact with him. The other was of the quiet confidence that he radiated.⁶⁰

*—Massoud, who has just turned 30, is clearly in charge here. And his writ appears to be spreading well beyond his Panjshir Valley. Since the Soviet Union invaded . . . Massoud has built a reputation as the ablest guerrilla commander in the Afghan resistance. . . . He possesses a rare ability to inspire loyalties and attract followers. . . . He is widely seen as the leading hope for forging some kind of practical unity among Afghanistan's fractious resistance groups.*⁶¹

However, according to William Branigin of *The Washington Post*, "Massoud does not cut a particularly imposing figure."⁶²

He had the typical *Tajik* narrow face, hooked nose, and brown eyes. In contrast to the dour, never-smiling countenances of most of the Peshawar-based leaders, photos of Massoud showed a face with smiling eyes and a pleasant expression. His dress normally was a military jacket, captured Soviet fatigue trousers, Afghan army boots, and the traditional *pakol*, a flat woolen cap. What set him apart from his colleagues were the multi-pocketed fishing vest and Spanish pistol he usually wore and the miniature short-wave radio and small binoculars he often carried.⁶³

Massoud was an ethnic *Tajik* originating from the Panjshir Valley. His family had been prominent in the Panjshir and his father was a retired army brigadier general. In the 1970s Massoud attended the prestigious French-run Istiqlal School in Kabul and then the Soviet-affiliated Polytechnic Institute. While at the French school he learned to speak some French. He had once hoped to continue his studies abroad but instead



Photo courtesy J. Verberg

AHMED SHAH MASSOUD
Internationally known guerrilla commander, known as the "Lion of the Panjshir."

dropped out of school, having become upset by leftist influences in the government after Mohammad Daoud overthrew King Zahir in 1973. Going underground to work against the government, Massoud lived at various times in Peshawar, Nuristan, and Kabul. In 1975 he was a participant in the unsuccessful Panjshir revolt against the Daoud regime. After the 1978 leftist coup he returned to the Panjshir and organized a resistance force, initially with just 30 followers, 17 rifles of various makes, and funds equivalent to \$130.⁶⁴

Early in his fighting career against the DRA and the Soviets, Massoud rejected the then usual guerrilla tactic of massed attacks on well-defended positions. Instead, he adopted with success the classic tactic of hit-and-run attacks on vulnerable targets.

By early summer of 1983, Massoud had devised a new military structure, consisting of three kinds of groups: regionally stationed commandos, mobile commandos, and a strike force called *Zarbat*. The valley was divided into military districts and sub-districts. Each district was composed of several villages and included military, economic, and political committees, as well as committees of mullahs,* judges, and the people. His overall second-in-command was a Dr. Abdul Hay; three other commanders led Massoud-affiliated guerrilla forces outside the valley.⁶⁵

As for ties with Peshawar-based organizations, Massoud nominally was affiliated with Rabbani's *Jamiat-i-Islami*, which provided arms support. Though the Panjshir Valley often was described as being "*Jamiat*-controlled," Massoud was not under *Jamiat* direction.

As might be expected, other Peshawar-based organizations resented the acclaim and world publicity given Massoud. The rival Fundamentalist group, Gulbuddin's *Hezb-i-Islami*, was critical of Massoud and derisively referred to him as the "King of Panjshir."⁶⁶ According to a British interviewer in 1982, "Massoud was guided by a vision of a fundamentalist Moslem state modeled on Iran," but with none of Khomeini's "intolerance."⁶⁷

* Literally, "tutor" or "master," designating Muslims of a quasi-clerical class trained in traditional law and doctrine. "Mullah" is an English form of a title given to religious leaders, teachers in religious schools, persons versed in the canon law, and leaders of prayer in the mosque or in reciting the Quran. While no formal requirements are needed for acquisition of the title, persons normally called by it have had some training in a religious school. The word often is used to designate the entire class that upholds the traditional interpretation of Islam.

In August 1983, in extensive interviews with American correspondent William Branigin, "Massoud expressed staunchly anti-communist, pro-Western, and Islamic convictions, rejecting the notion put about by his fundamentalist rivals that he is a closet leftist." When two Iranian emissaries visited Massoud in 1982, with an offer of help from the Khomeini government on condition that he adopt anti-American positions, he spurned the approach. Massoud reportedly told the Iranians that he was fighting the Soviets, and that the Americans were supporting the Afghan effort. Nevertheless, in his talks with Branigin, Massoud was critical of the American Government for not doing more to support the resistance and for possessing, in his view, a cynical, self-serving attitude toward the resistance.⁶⁸

Massoud's Panjshir organization was one of the few resistance groups that established a political structure, along with a military one, to raise taxes, distribute welfare funds, and run courts and schools. To make sure of the support of local mullahs, Massoud took pains to consult with them and obtain their backing on important decisions; at the same time he limited them to spiritual roles, rather than political or military.⁶⁹

MOHAMMAD ZABIULLAH OF BALKH PROVINCE

Next to Massoud, the guerrilla leader who most impressed Western newsmen during the period 1980-84 was "**Mohammad Zabiullah**," another young commander in his late 20s. His true name was Abdul Qader. Described as both reticent and charismatic, he had emerged in Balkh province bordering the Soviet Union as a person also possessing outstanding leadership qualities.⁷⁰ A Westerner described Zabiullah in 1982 as follows:

*A broad smile lightens his face, which is framed by a worthy beard. Rather round and small, he has nothing of the guerrilla chief about him. Nevertheless, he commands the region of Mazar-i-Sharif and leads several thousand mujahidin.*⁷¹

In 1979, prior to the Soviet invasion, Zabiullah had been a commander with Massoud in the Panjshir before returning to his own province. Earlier, he had been an Islamic religious teacher. Zabiullah apparently had relatives in Soviet Uzbekistan.⁷²

Early in the resistance around Mazar-i-Sharif, the provincial capital, Zabiullah personally led guerrilla fighters in attacks on the Soviets and DRA army. But by 1983 most of the fighting was being left to commanders under his direction. An excellent organizer, he divided the region under his control into 73 military districts, each with a commander and one or more guerrilla bands. Most of these bands deliberately were kept small, containing 10, 20, or at most 30 fighters. All were under the general command of Zabiullah.⁷³ His whole organization was affiliated with *Jamiat*.

Like Massoud in the Panjshir, Zabiullah did not neglect the civil side of administration. He established literacy classes and schools that taught both Islam and guerrilla warfare. The Kabul government unsuccessfully tried to buy off Zabiullah. He was approached twice with offers of money or positions, in exchange for which he was asked to guarantee that his guerrilla forces would not attack Soviet or DRA convoys in the Marmol Gorge.

On 14 December 1984 Commander Zabiullah was killed in Balkh province when the vehicle in which he was riding was blasted by a land mine, allegedly laid by a rival guerrilla band.



Photo: Gault

"MOHAMMAD ZABIULLAH" was the resistance leader in Balkh province; he was killed on 14 December 1984.

THE HAZARAJAT RESISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS

One of the curious phenomena of the history of the Afghan resistance was the early and successful stand taken by the Hazaras, an ethnic minority that long had been the object of social discrimination. A distinctive minority possessing Mongol physical features, the Hazaras in religion followed the less popular Shiite Moslem faith. They mostly lived in a mountainous tri-province region encompassing 34 districts, called the Hazarajat. The region included some of

Afghanistan's outstanding tourist attractions, but it was one of the least developed areas in the country. Few paved roads, schools, or hospitals served its population of four million.

The Hazaras were among the first groups to revolt against the leftist Kabul government in 1979. Officials from the Kabul government were killed or expelled and replaced with locally chosen civil officials. A local administration was established. This new administration was called the *Shura-i Engelab-i Ettfaq-i Islami Afghanistan* (Revolutionary Council of Islamic Unity of Afghanistan), known as *Shura* for short. *Shura* shared with Massoud's Panjshir organization, and a few others, the distinction of operating a wide range of government services. It had a government hierarchy (with working hours and one day off a week), a military arm, some educational and medical facilities, and offices in Pakistan and Iran. *Shura's* leader was a well-known local religious figure, Sayed Ali Beheshii.⁷⁴

From the time of its establishment, *Shura* was beset with that common Afghan weakness—factionalism. *Shura* nevertheless remained the most important Hazarajat resistance group, although by 1983 three other competing resistance organizations had been established. Several times in 1982 and 1983 the rivalry among the groups resulted in fighting. By the end of 1983 *Shura* still controlled the most territory and 60 to 65 percent of the population in the Hazarajat.⁷⁵

Next to *Shura*, the most important local Hazara resistance organization was the pro-Iranian *Al-Nasr* (Victory); *Al-Nasr* controlled about 25 percent of the region and one of the main roads to Kabul. *Al-Nasr* was led by young men educated in Iran, including some radical Moslem clergy. Its opponents charged it with being infiltrated by the Iranian communist party *Tudeh*.⁷⁶

A third resistance organization in Hazarajat, controlling about 10 percent of the region, was called *Ettihad-i-Mujahidin-i Islami* (Union of Islamic Fighters). It was led by Maqsoudi and had its headquarters in Quetta, Pakistan.⁷⁷

Until 1983 *Al-Nasr* was the only resistance organization in Afghanistan clearly identified as receiving arms and other material aid from the Khomeini government. During 1983 Iran switched its aid to a fourth organization, a tiny Hazara resistance group called the *Sepah-e-Pasdaran*, but little is known about this group.

All the Hazarajat resistance organizations held a deep respect for Iran's Khomeini, in part because the Hazaras shared with most Iranians the Shiite Moslem faith. Pictures of Khomeini were displayed in shops and houses all over the Hazarajat. A French newsman commented:

*In Hazarajat, the portrait of Khomeini is part of the decor. The people display it ostentatiously everywhere, over the doorways of their huts and in the bazaars, in the inns and public buildings.*⁷⁸

Although the Hazaras avowed that they were Afghans and had no intention of taking political direction from Khomeini, *Shura* leader Beheshti said of the Iranian leader: "Khomeini's revolution was 100 percent successful. He has laid the path."⁷⁹ None of the Hazara organizations had any use for the Peshawar-based resistance organizations and had no affiliation with any of them.

Soviet-DRA presence in the Hazarajat region was minimal; this presence consisted only of two small helicopter-supplied garrisons located adjacent to two provincial capitals, Bamian and Chakcharan. During 1982 and 1983 the Soviets and the DRA army made little attempt to venture outside their fortified enclaves, and the Hazaras ignored them. In fact, of all the resistance-controlled areas in Afghanistan, the Hazarajat probably was the most tranquil. This peacefulness perhaps was due to the strategic unimportance of the region for the Soviets. No major roads ran through the rugged region, which contained few important economic assets.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY RESISTANCE LEADERS WITHIN AFGHANISTAN

Like Massoud and Zabiullah, other renowned resistance leaders in Afghanistan mostly were locally based. Their deeds often were well known, but little biographical information was available. The following seven names were particularly prominent:

- **Abdul Haq**, the 26-year-old (in 1984) commander of *Hezbi* (Yunis Khalis's party) in the Kabul region. A Pushtun from a village near Jalalabad, he had been tortured and condemned to death under President Daoud in 1977. When the communists took power in 1978 Haq was released, thanks to a bribe. His group was responsible for

the 1981 kidnapping of the senior Soviet geologist in Afghanistan, and the execution of this official when the Soviets refused a prisoner exchange. Haq's group also took responsibility for destroying two helicopters at the Jalalabad airbase. Abdul Haq visited France, along with some other guerrilla leaders, in April 1982.⁸⁰

- **Ismael Khan**, 36 (in 1984), a former Afghan army captain or major who developed an impressive organization in the city and province of Herat. In a unique election he was chosen guerrilla commander of the province. His organization was *Jamiat*-affiliated. He speaks good English.

- **Malawi Jalaluddin Haqani**, by 1982 the leading guerrilla leader in Paktia. Under his command were strong, well-armed groups fighting in Khost and Urgan; these groups were responsible for the fall of three DRA military outposts. Much of Haqani's influence was derived from his standing in the Zadran tribe. He once was affiliated with Gailani's *Mahaz*, but other sources say that by 1984 he had switched ties to Yunis Khalis's *Hezb* group.

- **Amin Wardak**, head of the largest resistance group in Wardak province. A French-speaking graduate of the Istiqlal School in Kabul, he had a reputation for being an above-average administrator. He often traveled to Pakistan and visited Washington, DC, in 1984. Wardak's organization was affiliated with Gailani's *Mahaz*, but by 1984 the relationship was strained.

- **Abdul Kariam Brahui**, a Baluch, an ex-lieutenant of the Afghan army, and general commander of the Nimruz Front in Nimruz province.

- **Anwar Amin**, commander of some forces in Kunar province. He was prominent in 1980 but declined in importance thereafter.

- **Mulawai Mohammad Shah**, general commander of the Sharafat Kuh Front in Farah province.

LEFTIST RESISTANCE GROUPS

By 1983 very few leftist resistance groups existed either outside Afghanistan or within the country. As one guerrilla commander explained: "At the present time, no one in Afghanistan can be on the left. Taraki, Amin, and then the Russians. . . have discredited the ideas of the left once and for all."⁸¹

An Afghan Maoist party, called *Shola-i-Javaid* (Eternal Flame)—a break-away group of the *Parcham* faction of the PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) dating from the mid-1970s—had some adherents up to 1981. In August of 1981 the Karmal government arrested many of its members, who numbered allegedly only in the hundreds. Nothing has been heard of the party since, and it presumably disintegrated.

An offshoot of the *Shola-i-Javaid*, called SAMA (*Sazman-e-Azadbaksh Marcom-e-Afghanistan*; Organization for the Liberation of Afghanistan), was active for a while in Kabul city and the immediate province to the north, carrying out sabotage and political assassinations. It also had some adherents in West Germany. SAMA's founder, Abdul Qayyum, a self-styled "independent Marxist," was captured by DRA forces in February 1980 and was executed soon afterward. By 1982 the SAMA organization was limited to one band in Nimruz province and not-very-active groups in two villages in Parwan province.⁸²

Still another splinter group of the Marxist PDPA party, called *Settim-i-Melli*, apparently had ceased operating as a resistance force by 1981. Its base always had been the province of Badakhshan. As one foreigner explained:

*It took stock of its complete lack of support among the mass of the population and went over to the government in August 1982, ruling Faizabad (the provincial capital) jointly with Khalq and Parcham party members, in fact enjoying the lion's share of local communist influence.*⁸³

In 1981 a *Settim-i-Melli* resistance group was driven out of the Panjshir Valley by Massoud's organization. By 1983 the tiny *Settim-i-Melli* appeared to have totally joined the Kabul government; in October 1983 one of its leaders, Bashir Baghlani, was made the new Minister of Justice.

Outside Afghanistan existed a moderate socialist organization popularly called *Afghan Mellat* (Afghan Nation). Its active leader was Secretary-General Mohamed Amin Wakman; Wakman was based in New Delhi, India, traveled extensively to Europe, and frequently gave press interviews. *Afghan Mellat* was descended from the former Social Democratic Party, which had won a few local elections in Kabul in the 1960s during the reign of King Zahir Shah. After the Soviet invasion it opened an office in Peshawar under the leadership of an ex-Kabul mayor, Ghulam Mohammad Farhad. But the Pakistan

government never recognized it as an authorized resistance organization. The organization also suffered from factionalism and split into at least two entities, one called *Afghan Mellat* and the other just *Mellat*. In September 1980 one of its few guerrilla bands inside Afghanistan was badly mauled in a fight with a Gulbuddin *Hezb* guerrilla band. In May 1983 the Kabul regime claimed that it had uncovered and eliminated a clandestine *Afghan Mellat* unit in Kabul. By the end of 1983 most observers believed *Afghan Mellat* no longer had a following inside the country.

A measure of how discredited the Afghan left had become is the fact that *Afghan Mellat* was treated like a pariah by the recognized Peshawar-based resistance groups. Though Wakman associated his party with the Social Democratic Party movement in Western Europe, the Peshawar coalitions considered him anathema. They charged him with having once supported the Taraki regime. In August 1983 the Moderate Unity of Three issued a press release calling *Afghan Mellat* a "wicked and atheist group." The Moderates rejected Wakman's efforts to cooperate in establishing a United Front under the leadership of the ex-king.⁸⁴

FIGHTING AMONG GUERRILLA BANDS

In July 1981 a Dutch journalist visiting resistance forces in the Kabul region reported that the Afghans were engaged in "two civil wars simultaneously": one against the Soviets and DRA, and the other among themselves.⁸⁵

The main reason for the infighting was to achieve local dominance so the resistance leader could claim, "my party controls the area completely."⁸⁶ Political motives were behind this infighting, as well as a wish by each party to convince supporters abroad that their particular organization deserved priority.

The first clash between guerrilla bands occurred in December 1978, a year before the Soviet invasion. In this clash, Gulbuddin's forces allegedly killed 10 members of Rabbani's *Jamiat-i-Islami* forces in the Parachinar district of Pakistan. Other clashes followed, some of which were publicized, as follows:

- In August 1979 the Afghan army garrison at Asmara in Kunar province, under Colonel Abdur Rauf, defected to the resistance but refused to join Gulbuddin's organization. Gulbuddin thereupon attacked the Rauf force with arms.⁸⁷

● As mentioned, in September 1980 the leader of the small socialist exile group, *Afghan Mellat*, complained that a Gulbuddin band had attacked one of his forces, leading to 45 deaths between the two groups.⁸⁸

● A Dutch journalist, Aernout Van Lynden, who accompanied a guerrilla band to the Kabul vicinity in May-June 1981, reported that the insurgents often were spending as much time fighting each other as the Kabul government and the Soviets—and that Gulbuddin's forces usually were the aggressors.⁸⁹

● In August 1983 *Washington Post* correspondent William Branigin witnessed a firefight near Kabul between Rabbani- and Gulbuddin-affiliated groups.⁹⁰

The resistance party most often cited as the initiator of these clashes was Gulbuddin's *Hezb*. In November 1983 a French journalist, Olivier Roy, after visiting Afghanistan, wrote: "about half the *Hezb-i-Islami* (Gulbuddin) commanders are responsible for 90 percent of the clashes within the resistance."⁹¹

Once blood was spilled, efforts to bring about a truce or peace among the bloodied guerrilla forces were difficult. These efforts were particularly difficult in Laghman province, just east of Kabul. Certain areas remained a battleground between rival groups down through 1983. Contested regions are listed in table 1.

Table 1
Contested regions and their guerrilla affiliations

Area	Years	Guerrilla affiliations
Kapisa province (Shomali Plain)	1981-83	<i>Hezb</i> (Gulbuddin) vs. <i>Jamiat</i>
Kabul province	1981-83	<i>Hezb</i> (Gulbuddin) vs. all others
Samangan province	1981-83	<i>Harakat</i> vs. <i>Jamiat</i>
Laghman province	1982-83	<i>Hezb</i> (Gulbuddin) vs. <i>Jamiat</i>
Wardak province: Maidan area	1983	<i>Hezb</i> (Gulbuddin) vs. Sayaf's group
Bami'an province	1982-83	<i>Shura</i> vs. <i>Al-Nasr</i>
Nimruz province	1982	Nimruz Front vs. SAMA faction

Fighting among guerrilla bands made many Afghans and outsiders wonder whether civil war could be avoided in any post-Soviet Afghanistan. *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent Edward Girardet, after visiting Panjshir Valley commander Ahmed Shah Massoud, reported:

Apart from the Russians, one of the main concerns of Massoud and other guerrilla commanders is the possibility of civil war following a Soviet withdrawal.⁹²

Counterbalancing some of the infighting, though, were many instances of cooperation and alliances among different guerrilla groups. By 1983 many provinces reported some successful cooperative arrangement, even if no more than a truce. In early 1984 a guerrilla commander based near Kabul reported:

We the internal commanders have succeeded in establishing connection between provinces; exchanging letters and messages. I myself participated in a conference of Mujahidin commanders from the north and the west which lasted one week. We were from different organizations.⁹³

Some provinces, such as Badakhshan and Herat, boasted overall province-wide general commanders. The usual situation existing, however, was that of several independent guerrilla bands within each province, each affiliated with a different Peshawar-based party. (See Appendix C for a 1983 list of province-by-province guerrilla group affiliations.)

THE RECORD OF THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF SOVIET occupation shows a fragmented resistance leadership, committed to the objective of unity but unwilling to compromise or subsume personal ambition to achieve that goal. Repeated efforts to bring about a unified resistance organization failed.

The basic problem was that the traditional structure of political power in Afghanistan had been shattered—probably forever. Almost none of the pre-1978 political figures was active in the resistance. Many former Afghan cabinet ministers and senior government officials took asylum in Western Europe and the United States, but few

played a prominent resistance role. Some did cooperate in 1982-83 in pushing for a national assembly to form a resistance United Front, but most only helped the resistance cause on a part-time or occasional basis. Most former establishment figures were preoccupied with eking out a living in their country of exile and establishing a new life for their families. Many of these former leaders were resigned to a long Soviet occupation.

Before the 1978 Marxist coup—and even during the leftist regimes of Taraki and Amin—political primacy had been held by the *Pushtu*-speaking half of Afghanistan. Pushtun tribes occupying the provinces bordering Pakistan had wielded considerable influence; the Durrani Muhammadzai clan, which ruled Afghanistan for 150 years, came from this element. The possibility that Pushtun dominance would continue in any post-Soviet Afghanistan was doubtful. The best resistance commanders and organizations within Afghanistan were non-Pushtun.

Furthermore, the traditional leadership at the tribal or local level—exemplified by the Khans, Maleks, Arbabs, and Bays—had lost much of its influence. The traditional tribal leadership element was not leading the insurgency; leadership instead had passed to religious and spiritual figures and military commanders within the local communities.⁹⁴

Another curious aspect of the resistance movement was the paucity of former military officers among guerrilla commanders or in leadership roles among resistance organizations in exile. Among the 150 or 200 guerrilla bands in Afghanistan, probably no more than a dozen were led by former military officers. Only two of these leaders were widely known: ex-Army Captain Ismael Khan, leading guerrilla commander in Herat province; and former Army Colonel Rahmatullah Safi, active in guerrilla warfare training in border areas.

Where had the 8,000-man pre-1978-coup officer corps gone? The most likely explanation was that one-half of the corps had been executed during the bloody 1978-79 Taraki-Amin era. Of the remainder, perhaps a third had chosen to stay in the armed services; another third had fled abroad—most into obscurity—and the rest had been retired or transferred to other government agencies. After the Soviet intervention the Afghan officer corps was composed predominantly of new personnel.

Among the Peshawar-based organizations, leaders with an Islamic religious connection dominated. Yet historically religious figures had never dominated political leadership within Afghanistan itself. While religious families were respected and venerated, Afghans had never been governed by religious leaders.

Peshawar-based leaders were well known internationally, often traveling to the Arab countries, Western Europe, and North America to obtain support. But they commanded limited allegiance among Afghans in and outside Afghanistan. Enmities among some of them seemed almost as deep as toward the Kabul regime and the Soviets. Said a foreign diplomat in Islamabad: "if you let these various Peshawar groups do what they want, it probably would mean chaos and another civil war."⁹⁵

The respected head of the Afghan Information Centre in Peshawar, Sayd Majrooh, told a foreign newsman in January 1984: "their [the resistance] military organization is getting better, their political organization is a mess."⁹⁶ Yet some Afghans counseled patience. Said a guerrilla commander in early 1984:

*Unity is and must be a slow process. Ill-organized resistance groups are losing; more and more mujahidin are uniting themselves around better organized groups and around personalities of outstanding commanders.*⁹⁷

These internal guerrilla commanders represented a new wave of leadership, unrelated to the traditional leadership of the past.

Many were in their 30s and 40s, and by Afghan standards they were well-educated. They did not necessarily have a strong clan or tribal background, but they were natural leaders who had proven themselves to be excellent guerrilla commanders. They usually were good organizers, knew the local population well, and were respected and obeyed.⁹⁸

In their areas they were virtually independent. The best known of these commanders was the 30-year-old *Tajik*, Ahmed Shah Massoud, commander of the Panjshir Valley organization. Though he showed no interest in visiting Pakistan or other regions of Afghanistan, he was widely admired and most often pointed to as the political figure to be reckoned with in any post-Soviet Afghanistan.

THE MILITARY STRUGGLE

1. Overview and Tactics

We have succeeded in liquidating the majority of the counter-revolutionary gangs. . . . There are no dangerous areas in this country.

*DRA Defense Minister Abdul Qader
May 1982*

THE LONGEST SOVIET FOREIGN WAR



HE GUERRILLA WAR IN AFGHANISTAN WAS ONE OF THE longest and bloodiest guerrilla struggles of the twentieth century. For the Soviets, it was their first war since the end of World War II. By the end of 1984 its duration had exceeded that of any foreign war in which the Soviets had engaged since seizing power in 1917. Soviet casualties had reached perhaps 25,000 killed and wounded, while Afghan losses probably totaled 300,000 killed and wounded, including civilians.

When the Soviets intervened in Afghanistan in December 1979, they probably anticipated that their armed forces, together with the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) army, would be able to pacify the country within a year or so. Instead, the Soviets soon found that the already tenuous control by the DRA of the countryside further declined. Soviet troops, supplemented by units of the DRA army, were able to control Kabul, parts of the other major cities, and scattered military posts along the main highways. But the resistance forces—or *mujahidin*, as they called themselves—held about 85 percent of the countryside and at night sections of such large cities as

Kandahar, Herat, and Mazar-i-Sharif. Strong Soviet units could penetrate to any part of the country. When they withdrew, however, the insurgents resumed control. Militarily, the situation was a standoff.

For the resistance, this standoff was a remarkable achievement. Despite a lack of formal military training, little coordination among partisan groups, and a foe possessing overwhelmingly superior firepower and total air control, the resistance not only had survived but had grown into a formidable force. Perhaps most amazing of all was its high morale. Edward Girardet of *The Christian Science Monitor*, after his 1982 visit to the resistance in Afghanistan, wrote: "wherever you went you saw signs of the incredible Afghan determination not to be beaten."¹

The five years of fighting brought some military changes to both sides. The Soviets increased their forces by almost a third—from about 80,000 shortly after the invasion to 115,000 by the end of 1984; another 30,000 were stationed near the border in the USSR. Many Soviet air strikes were launched from bases in the USSR. The DRA army, however, shrank by a half, from about 60,000 to 30,000 men.²

The Soviets also had invested considerable resources in the country. They improved their military infrastructure in Afghanistan by erecting more buildings, improving or building 12 airfields, and constructing more secure peripheral defenses about their bases.

The *mujahidin* became stronger too. By the end of 1983 they were better armed than ever before, wiser in the ways of guerrilla warfare, and had grown in numbers to perhaps 80,000 full-time fighters.³

Military activity during the five years followed a pattern that essentially changed little. Soviet and DRA forces periodically emerged from their heavily defended bastions to conduct sweeps in *mujahidin*-held areas, and then would return to their bases. The resistance, for its part, carried out frequent small-unit attacks on Soviet-DRA outposts and highway convoys, and engaged in sabotage and assassinations in the cities. The result was a deadlock. The Soviets and DRA forces were unable to exterminate the resistance; at the same time, the *mujahidin* were unable to expel the Soviets or overrun and hold any important town or Soviet-DRA-defended position.

THE SOVIETS PLAY DOWN THE WAR

During the first two years of Soviet occupation, the Soviet press never admitted the involvement of Soviet troops in combat in Afghanistan. The little Soviet news coverage that did come out about Soviet military activity was not informative.⁴

Afghan students returning from the Soviet Union often commented on how poorly informed the Soviet public was about the real situation in Afghanistan. This lack of information was a reflection of the Soviet authoritarian system that was geared to screen out unfavorable news, to distort facts, and to hew to the set propaganda line. Soviet soldiers were prohibited from discussing their military experience, even after separation from military service.

Such information as was provided during 1980-81 to the Soviet public about Afghanistan sought to give the impression that the "limited contingent" of Soviet troops lived a normal home-country type of life in Afghanistan, confining for the most part of training exercises. Only occasionally was mention made of the courage displayed by some soldier subjected to "a severe test."⁵ Not until September 1981, almost two years after the invasion, did the Soviet media for the first time admit to the death of a Soviet soldier, in this case a military adviser attached to DRA troops.⁶ For the most part, during those first two years, the theme repeated in the Soviet media was that "the situation (in Afghanistan) is gradually but steadily normalizing." No details ever were given.⁷

Then, in 1982 and more so in 1983, the Soviet press began hinting that Soviet troops sometimes were directly involved in the fighting. Again, however, no details were given on where the fighting occurred or what was the role of Soviet troops.⁸

By the end of 1983, despite a Western estimate of 20,000 accumulated Soviet casualties, the Soviet media had reported only six deaths and six wounded after four years of fighting.⁹ Two of the very few Soviet press statements touching on how the troops were faring were as follows:

—We are not going to hide the fact that they are having a tough time, and sometimes it is very, very tough.¹⁰

—It is dangerous for our officers and men fulfilling their internationalist duty in Afghanistan.¹¹

The Soviet public could only receive substantive news about the Afghan war in two ways: either by talking with a returned Soviet soldier who was willing to ignore the rule against discussing military service; or by listening to foreign broadcasts, such as the Munich-based Radio Liberty, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) service, or the Voice of America. Less than half of the Soviet public listened to such outside sources.

THE KABUL REGIME TOES THE LINE Since the Kabul government was under Soviet control it, too, never discussed the Soviet role in the fighting. It sought to give the impression that such fighting as occurred was by DRA forces and that the insurgency was being crushed.

UNFOLDING OF THE WAR

Analyzing the guerrilla war in Afghanistan defies precision and accuracy. No tabulation of guerrilla incidents exists, unless in secret military files in Kabul or Moscow. The Peshawar-based resistance organizations and a few private Western organizations did make attempts to report the more significant clashes. But these accounts often differed and in any case were not inclusive of all important incidents. Much of the guerrilla war probably never will be part of recorded history. Certainly, the experience of thousands of resisting Afghans in hundreds of small engagements has been lost to posterity. No Ernest Hemingway is ever likely to appear to write an Afghan version of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

THE INSURGENCY BREAKS OUT The revolt against the DRA began on 4 October 1978, a little more than a year before the Soviet invasion, in a hamlet called Yurmur, in Kunar province in the mountainous region of Nuristan adjacent to Pakistan. Following an ancient Afghan practice, when dissatisfied with Kabul's rule, villagers from three small tribes grabbed their firearms and chased away the local administration. From Yurmur the revolt spread throughout Nuristan and then north across the Hindu Kush mountains into the large Soviet-bordering province of Badakhshan.¹²

1979 After a winter hiatus, the insurgency spread to the west where, in March 1979, the first major urban uprising occurred in Herat, the country's third largest city. Some 3,000 to 5,000 persons were killed and wounded in Herat city before the revolt was suppressed. As many as 100 Soviets reportedly were killed in Herat.

most of them civilian advisers and their families. A month later, residents of the mountainous Hazarajat region in the center of the country revolted and eliminated government representatives in most of three provinces (Bamian, Ghor, and Oruzgan). By the summer of 1979 some Pakistan-border tribes in Paktia province also had rebelled.

The pendulum of the insurgency then swung back to Badakhshan province in the northeast, an area that had been in ferment since the original Nuristan revolt. In November 1979 the Kabul administration lost control of the entire province, with insurgents temporarily occupying the provincial capital, Faizabad. Had not Soviet-led DRA forces, reportedly supported by small Soviet army units, quickly counterattacked and recaptured Faizabad, the entire province would have become liberated—as had by then happened in most of the Hazarajat.

The Badakhshan case was so serious for the Amin government that it must have been one of the factors triggering the Soviet decision to invade the next month. Badakhshan also happened to be the one Afghan province that bordered the People's Republic of China; the Soviets were sensitive to rumors of alleged Chinese aid through the province to the insurgents. With successive revolts in the multi-province regions of Nuristan and Hazarajat, in Herat city, and in the border provinces of Paktia and Badakhshan, the Soviets must have concluded that without their intervention the pro-Soviet Kabul regime would collapse.

THE SOVIETS INTERVENE BUT THE REVOLT SPREADS When Moscow interjected 80,000 troops into Afghanistan, starting in December 1979, the Soviets apparently envisioned these troops as serving solely to stiffen the spine of the demoralized DRA Army. By having Soviet troops relieve some DRA army units from garrison duty in the major towns, the Soviets probably calculated that the DRA army would have the strength to pacify the insurgency. The Soviets also may have expected that the mere presence of Soviet military contingents in the country would serve to cow the insurgents.

1980 Instead, the insurgency grew and spread across Afghanistan. In 1980 major uprisings took place in several cities: in Kandahar, the second largest city, again in Herat, and in Jalalabad. At times, for periods of up to a week, the resistance totally controlled the cities of Kandahar and Herat, before Soviet-DRA forces were

able to reestablish control. Heavy fighting also took place in the already-troubled rural regions of Nuristan and Hazarajat, as Soviet-DRA forces sought to reestablish Kabul's presence. The fighting spread also to Parwan province just north of Kabul, and then to the 60-mile-long Panjshir Valley in Kapisa province. The Panjshir Valley soon was to become famous as a resistance stronghold. By the end of 1980, the first year of Soviet occupation, probably 75 percent of Afghanistan's land area was under resistance control.¹³

1981 By the end of 1981 all 29 provinces of the country were experiencing guerrilla warfare. No province remained loyal to the Kabul government or welcomed the Soviet forces. Reports were frequent of ambushes on Soviet-DRA convoys and attacks on government administrative posts in the countryside. Security on the main highways markedly deteriorated; nighttime highway traffic became confined to insurgent-manned jeeps and trucks.¹⁴

1982 The most ambitious Soviet-DRA pacification effort so far was undertaken during 1982—an attempt to reestablish government authority in the Panjshir Valley. Entrance to the valley was about 60 miles north of Kabul, near the point where the main north-south highway over the Salang Pass starts its climb across the Hindu Kush range. Five earlier efforts to secure the valley had failed. In the biggest Soviet offensive yet attempted, between 12,000 and 15,000 Soviet and DRA troops drove into the valley and confronted about 5,000 guerrillas under the command of Ahmed Shah Massoud. The campaign lasted six weeks, but the Soviet-DRA forces were unable to maintain their presence in the valley. These forces withdrew after suffering an estimated 3,000 casualties; up to 1,000 defections to the resistance side were reported, including a few Soviet soldiers.¹⁵

The failure of the sixth Panjshir campaign was hailed by Afghans as a victory. It propelled Massoud into world limelight as perhaps the most effective resistance leader.

Though the Soviets failed that year in the Panjshir they registered some successes elsewhere. Notable was the reopening of the main highway between Kabul and Gardez, through Lowgar province, and the temporary crushing of the resistance in Lowgar province. (See Appendix D for the history of the resistance in one province—Lowgar—from 1979 to 1983. See Appendix E for a detailed look at the resistance in one province—Badakhshan—at the end of 1982.)

1983 During 1983, the fourth year of the Soviet occupation, the guerrilla war continued unabated. Urban warfare in Herat, Kandahar, and Mazar-i-Sharif led to retaliatory destruction of many buildings in those cities by the Soviets. But sections of those urban centers still remained in the hands of the *mujahidin*. Herat and Kandahar cities particularly were savaged by the war. In April 1983 waves of Soviet bombers pounded Herat with bombs; an estimated 3,000 Afghans perished in the bombings. Whether more persons died in Herat in the March 1979 uprising or in the bombings of April 1983 was a moot question.

Twice during the summer of 1983 spectacular guerrilla attacks were made on Kabul itself, the most heavily garrisoned of the Soviet-held Afghan cities. Also, several isolated Soviet-DRA outposts in the Pakistan-bordering provinces of Paktia and Paktika fell to the resistance. In late December, over snow-covered terrain, the Soviets managed to recapture the largest of these, Urgan.¹⁶

By the end of 1983 Soviet units were based in all provinces of Afghanistan. But most of these troops were to be found at intervals along the country's main, horseshoe-shaped highway. This highway ran south from Termez, USSR, to Kabul, southwest to Kandahar, northwest to Herat, and finally north to Torghundi. Torghundi was the other main Soviet-Afghanistan crossing point. The Soviet bases were like a string of beads spaced on a necklace.

1984 The fifth year of the Soviet occupation ended with another military impasse. Though guerrilla warfare and Soviet sweeps and strikes continued in every province, no significant change occurred for either side. In their seventh attack up the Panjshir Valley, the Soviets attempted to destroy definitively this most renowned center of Afghan resistance, but as before they failed. By September, the Soviet-DRA forces had withdrawn from the valley territory originally run over in May. As for Kabul, it suffered from more outside insurgent rocket attacks and planted bombings than at any time in the last three years.

The main result of the year's fighting was more destruction by the Soviets in the already devastated cities of Kandahar and Herat, and the further destruction of dozens of villages suspected of supporting the resistance.

After five years of occupation, Western military analysts concluded that the fighting between the Soviet-DRA forces and the *mujahidin* remained a standoff. Each side could point to successes, but they were balanced by failures. Some analysts argued, though, that in a sense the Afghan resistance should be considered the winner of the five-year struggle. The *mujahidin* had held off one of the most sophisticated superpower armies in the world. And they had done it by improvisation, by raw courage, and by a national determination to resist an invader and an imposed regime: an impressive achievement.

CARRYING THE WAR TO THE SOVIET UNION Throughout the five years of struggle, periodic reports were heard of Afghan guerrillas crossing the northern border to attack the Soviet Union. Since the Afghan-USSR border is mostly fenced on the Soviet side—with a security patrol road just behind the fence and elevated watch towers every mile or so—it is not easy to penetrate. Except for a few towns on the Soviet side of the border river, Amu Darya, the Soviet population in the border zone has been removed. A wilderness strip of perhaps half a kilometer prevails, empty of people except for Soviet border guards.

Despite these obstacles, the *mujahidin* claimed that they had made successful raids in 1981 and 1982 across the Amu Darya river from Badakhshan, Takhar, and Kunduz provinces; they reported that they had blown up watch towers and power lines. One partisan group claimed to have mined the security road on the Soviet side, destroying military vehicles and killing some Soviet soldiers.¹⁷ In the winter of 1983-84, in western Herat province, a guerrilla group apparently attacked the Soviet post at a border-crossing point, near Torghundi, and caused some damage.¹⁸

The effect on the Soviets of these sporadic attacks was minimal. But the *mujahidin* gained a morale boost from carrying the war to the Soviet Union.

CONFLICTING CLAIMS OF TERRITORIAL CONTROL

Throughout the five years, the DRA tried to present a propaganda picture that Afghanistan was almost totally under control of the

Soviet-Babrak government. A typical statement was that of Defense Minister Abdul Qader in May 1982 to a Hungarian television interviewer, that a "majority" of the partisan bands had been eliminated and that "no dangerous areas in this country existed."¹⁹ On 8 March 1983 Prime Minister Sultan Ali Keshtmand said:

*Conditions in Afghanistan are gradually returning to normal. . . . At present our government is in control practically of the whole country, and every rumor to the contrary is a lie.*²⁰

In June 1983 Defense Minister Abdul Qader reiterated "the whole territory is under DRA control."²¹

Yet the Prime Minister and Defense Minister both knew that the real situation was quite different. Confidential DRA army assessments leaked to the resistance admitted to 60 to 75 percent of the country's 271 districts as being out of DRA control.²² In June 1981 a Polish economic journal reported that the Kabul regime controlled only a quarter of Afghanistan, that guerrillas controlled 10 percent, and that 65 percent of the country was a no man's land over which neither side exercised permanent control.²³ Even the Soviets did not pretend that the country was firmly under Kabul rule. According to one Soviet journal in 1982, Kabul's control was in doubt over 18 of the country's 28 provinces.²⁴

Claims of resistance groups differed from one another. But generally these claims were that 80 to 90 percent of the land area was under resistance control during most hours of the day.²⁵ After dark, Soviet and DRA forces made little effort to venture from their held cities or military bases. At night virtually all of the countryside was in resistance hands. According to US Government estimates in 1983, probably 75 percent of Afghanistan's land area and two-thirds of its population were under resistance control.

A French correspondent who visited Afghanistan reported in November 1983 that:

Forty percent of the [271] districts do not even have a symbolic government presence. In most of the others, the government's authority extends to the administrative post's machine gun range. Only in 10 to 20 percent of the districts is the post

*surrounded by a small belt of villages siding with the regime, either by conviction or by self-interest or indifference.*²⁶

The most complete survey of Soviet-DRA versus *mujahidin* control of districts was undertaken at the end of 1982, under the auspices of the private Paris-based Afghan Information and Documentation Centre. This study, based on a review of the situation in each of the country's 271 districts, concluded that the *mujahidin* controlled 82 percent of Afghanistan's land area.²⁷

In only 15 districts, or 5.5 percent of the total number of districts, did the DRA control more than 50 percent of the land area. By contrast the resistance enjoyed 100 percent control over 94 districts, or 34.7 percent of the total number of districts. In certain provinces the extent of territorial control by the resistance was amazingly high: in Bamian province, 100 percent control in six of seven districts; in Lowgar province, 100 percent control in five of six districts; in Paktia province, 100 percent control in nine of 11 districts.

The district-by-district study showed the results listed in tables 2 and 3.

Table 2
Situation in the 28 provinces

Provinces under least resistance control (i.e., under 70% control)	Kabul, 47% Nimruz, 54 Badakhshan, 61%
Provinces where <i>mujahidin</i> controlled 70% to 90% of the land area	21 provinces
Provinces where <i>mujahidin</i> controlled over 90% of the land area	Wardak, 91% Ghazni, 93% Kapisa, 93% Lowgar, 93% Bamian, 97%

Table 3
Provincial districts most under Soviet-DRA control
 (those over 50% controlled)

Province	District	% under DRA Control
Kabul	Kabul city, national capital	100
	Chardehi	90
Badakhshan	Iskashem	90
	Zebak	90
	Faizabad, provincial capital	60
Takhar	Taluqan, provincial capital	90
Herat	Shindand, a major airbase	70
Nimruz	Zarang, provincial capital	90
	Chakhansoor	90
Hilmand	Lashkargah, provincial capital	70
Paktia	Sharana, provincial capital	80
	Katawaz	60
Nangarhar	Jalalabad, provincial capital	80
Kunar	Asadabad, provincial capital	60
Parwan	Charikar, provincial capital	60

Another interesting survey finding was that the resistance existed in all provinces. The strength of the resistance was a national phenomenon crossing ethnic and language lines. Soviet-DRA control was high only in those areas with massive Soviet garrisons, such as Kabul city, or where most of the population had been expelled, as in much of the Wakhan Corridor.

While the survey could not be officially corroborated, it was never challenged by any of the Peshawar-based resistance organizations. Western correspondents trekking into Afghanistan often

commented how they could walk for days without seeing any evidence of Soviet-DRA control or administration. Edward Girardet of *The Christian Science Monitor*, who visited the country annually, wrote:

*—September 1981: It is no exaggeration to say that the Afghan resistance commands almost the entire countryside. . . . In most parts visited by this correspondent during a 700-mile trek through several Afghan provinces, there is little sign of the Soviet presence.*²⁸

*—July 1982: Through the trek I was repeatedly struck by the almost total lack of communist control. . . . It was sometimes difficult to remember that this was a country at war.*²⁹

Another correspondent, Alain Chevalerias of the Brussels *Le Soir*, after traveling across Afghanistan to the Soviet border in Balkh province, wrote:

*December 1982: We generally move in the daytime. . . . We even borrow a wobbling truck for more than 100 kilometers. In the prefecture chief-towns, the buildings abandoned by the administration say clearly that the country has passed into the hands of the mujahidin.*³⁰

The fact that most of the countryside was in the hands of the resistance must have been a matter of chagrin to the Soviets. After five years of occupation they had little to show for their pacification efforts.

KABUL: SAFEST OF THE SOVIET-HELD CITIES?

Of the five major cities in Afghanistan, only two—Kabul and Jalalabad—were considered moderately safe in the opinion of the resident diplomatic community. A small diplomatic community still existed in Kabul; members of that diplomatic community, including Americans, felt reasonably secure as long as they did not venture into certain quarters of the city or ignore the 10 p.m.-4:30 a.m. curfew.

Yet life in the capital city of Kabul hardly was tranquil. Assassinations of PDPA party members, KHAD secret police operatives, and Soviets periodically occurred, along with guerrilla attacks on military and government targets. The Soviet Embassy was attacked four times with arms fire during the five-year period.

By day, the city was even more of an armed camp than it was in 1978-79 under the leftist government preceding the Soviet invasion. An *Izvestia* report in 1983 candidly stated:

*No matter which of the capital's institutions you go into—whether municipal offices or hospitals, state banks or editorial offices, district party headquarters or bread factories— you will invariably see people with guns in their hands.*³¹

A Western correspondent who revisited Kabul in December 1983, after an interval of a year, wrote:

*Kabul has been converted into a fortress bristling with weapons. . . . The Soviet command now makes no effort to conceal the strength of Russian personnel at the airport or in the town.*³²

However, another Western correspondent who visited Kabul for the first time in January 1984 found a less visible Soviet presence than he had expected. He wrote:

*In Kabul, the numerous Soviet troops keep a low profile. They guard key intersections, Soviet installations and Microrayon, a Soviet-built midrise neighborhood where many of Moscow's advisers and most of the ruling party's elite live.*³³

Perhaps the most perceptive account of the situation in Kabul in 1983 came from an American diplomat, former Afghan Charge d'Affaires Charles Dunbar, as follows:

The Soviet presence inside Kabul is surprisingly modest. Russian men and women are predominant among foreign shoppers in the city's modern neighborhoods but are seldom seen in other parts of town. While individual Soviet soldiers are a common sight by day, they do not give the impression of invaders who are enforcing their occupation at the point of a bayonet.

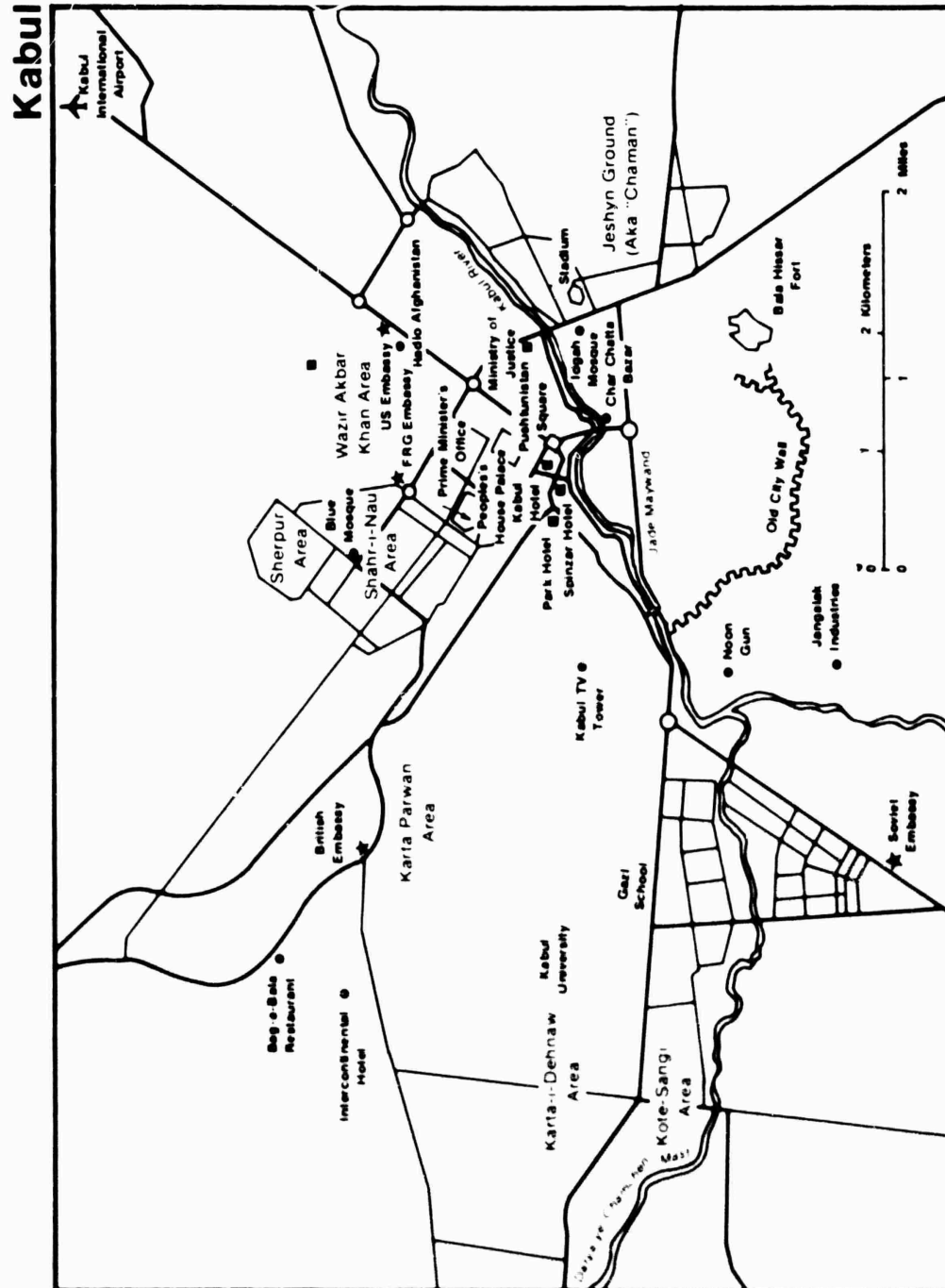
.... Yet after a few days in Kabul, the peaceful image of the city the regime tries to foster dissolves, and the war begins to creep into one's consciousness.... The more time one spends in Kabul, the more one becomes aware that the city's surface calm is deceptive. Suburban neighborhoods in the western and southern parts of town are under shaky regime control by day but become no-man's land at dusk.³⁴

During daylight hours the bazaars were busy. In 1983 long-time Afghan residents reported that almost the same profusion of foodstuffs and Japanese electronic goods was available as had been the case before 1978. For the Soviets, shopping was a delight because of the availability of Western consumer items. In 1983 an Afghan shopkeeper in Kabul's well-known Chicken Street told a Western correspondent:

We always know when Russian families are coming to do shopping. It begins with the arrival of two Russian trucks full of soldiers, who take up their positions along the street with their fingers on the trigger. Then limousines full of Soviet husbands and wives arrive. The husbands never let their wives out of their sight. As if at a given signal, everyone seems to have completed their purchases and the whole convoy sets off again home for Microrayon.³⁵

LIFE FOR SOVIET CIVILIANS AND AFGHAN PARTY MEMBERS Between 8,000 and 10,000 Soviet civilians (wives allowed but no children) lived in Kabul—and their life was a ghetto existence. The Microrayon apartment house complex, where most Soviet civilians lived, was surrounded by barbed wire and guarded with tanks manned by dual Soviet-DRA units.³⁶

Soviet residents left the compound only under guard and usually in groups. When they walked in the city, few could be oblivious to the hostility often directed against them. People shouted abuse and refused to give them directions. Shopkeepers often ignored them or refused to serve them. Small boys threw stones at them, and they occasionally were murdered or kidnapped.³⁷ A Soviet soldier on leave in the Soviet Union in the summer of 1982 confided that "even in Kabul there is no safe place to walk."³⁸



For Afghan PDPA (Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan) members and their families, life also was insecure. Over the five years dozens had been assassinated, sometimes as a result of the bitter feud between the two party factions, *Khalq* and *Parcham*. While the 10 p.m. curfew applied to the general public, party members feared the darkness and made a point of being in their walled-in houses by 4 or 5 p.m. Party meetings were never held after dark.³⁹

Kabul After Nightfall When darkness dropped over Kabul the atmosphere of the city changed. A Western diplomat described it as follows:

After dark, the streets in areas of the city where foreigners live are deserted long before the 10 p.m. curfew, and secret police jeeps identifiable because they keep only one headlight lit, seem almost as numerous as the cars of the ordinary citizenry. Armored personnel carriers appear at strategic crossroads, and others clank through the streets until dawn. There is often gunfire.⁴⁰

Even the heavily censored Soviet press revealed the siege atmosphere of the capital city. A December 1982 Soviet news report stated:

Circumstances change with the approach of curfew. Streets and alleys become empty. The footsteps of guards resound hollowly in the quiet that sets in, and patrol vehicles move about slowly. And now and then their headlights will suddenly pick up a sinister form, the barrel of a submachine gun will flash like a wolf's eyes, and a shot will ring out.⁴¹

Even for ordinary Afghans, life in Kabul was full of tension and fear. In a letter smuggled to a friend in France, an educated Afghan wrote:

Nobody feels safe and secure any more. The Russians eliminate mercilessly and without discrimination. Most robberies of houses and shops take place after curfew. . . . Government agents, especially Parcham party members, under the pretext of searching for arms or army deserters, enter houses without warning and steal and rob.⁴²

When a Soviet colonel in December 1982 interviewed the Afghan military commandant of Kabul, who had been at his post for three

years without vacation, the commandant said that he could only dream of the day when not a single shot would be heard in Kabul.⁴³

The same feeling of fear existed in Jalalabad, the other so-called safe city. When three Western correspondents were allowed to visit that city for three hours in January 1984, a 29-year-old teacher whispered to one of them: "everybody is afraid; everybody suspects everybody else."⁴⁴

SOVIET COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY

During the years 1980-84 the Soviets never developed a successful strategy to pacify the country. Several policies were tried, but the end result was failure. The resistance continued unabated.

In the 1920s and 1930s, in their internal fight against Basmachi* and Caucasian rebels, the Soviets gained rich experience in dealing with Moslem guerrilla insurgencies. Against the Basmachis, the Soviets used four tactics: divide the adversary; win over important native groups; create a strong communist party apparatus; and field a Moslem national army.⁴⁵ When these policies were tried in Afghanistan, they had limited or no success.

With the Afghan invasion, Moscow's original military intention was to secure the major cities and lines of communications, while stiffening the morale of the DRA forces. The Soviets apparently hoped that the DRA armed forces would do most of the counterinsurgency fighting. But the Soviets soon found their passive role

* The *Basmachis*, guerrillas operating in the eastern part of what was the khanate of Bukhara, were participants in a Moslem revolt against Soviet authority in Central Asia (Turkistan); the revolt began in 1919 and wasn't entirely suppressed until 1928. Soviet authorities in Central Asia not only regarded native intelligentsia with justifiable apprehension, they also had to cope with an active resistance on the part of conservative elements, which were anti-Russian as well as anti-communist. Local Red Army units extinguished the khanate of Khiva in 1919 and the khanate of Bukhara in 1920. The Soviet Union in time came to realize that armed insurrection was far less dangerous to the new Soviet regime than adherence to local communist parties or Moslem intellectuals, former nationalists turned Marxist but suspected of harboring separatist and pan-Turkish designs. Central Asian indigenous leadership (in the republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tadzhikistan, and Kirgizia) systematically was liquidated during the 1930s, when the Soviets reinforced their administrative and cultural autonomy by attempting to eliminate pan-Turkish or pan-Islamic sentiment through a "divide and rule" policy.

insufficient. Not only were Soviet troops soon called on to quell mutinies, but they almost immediately engaged in search-and-destroy sweeps. In those joint DRA-Soviet sweeps, the Soviets initially tried to compel the Kabul army to play the infantry role, while the Soviets would man the armored vehicles and the artillery. The Soviets soon found that the Kabul army was unreliable and often loath to fight. If serious fighting were to be done, the Soviets had to do it.

The first search-and-destroy sweeps took place in Badakhshan province in January 1980, with other major forays to follow in Kunar, Bamian, and Parwan provinces. By the end of 1980, Soviet troops apparently were fighting in all of the country's 29 provinces.⁴⁶

One aspect of the war that proved nettlesome to the Soviets was that some of the guerrillas used Pakistan as a safe haven; they also obtained some military equipment there. To stop the transborder traffic in men and arms, the Soviets tried blocking some key passes and mining many others. But this policy proved ineffective. Too many border-crossing places existed, including more than 200 mountain passes.

The Soviets apparently did consider the possibility of erecting a barrier along the 1,400-mile Afghanistan-Pakistan border. In the USSR the Soviet Union had built effective barrier fences along most of its land borders. East Germany had done the same thing for its border with West Germany and around West Berlin. Politburo member Anahita Ratebzad told Western interviewers in September 1982: "if we do not reach an agreement with Pakistan soon, we have no other recourse but to close off lengthy sections of the frontier, however expensive that might turn out to be."⁴⁷

She claimed that plans had been drawn up for an in-depth border security system, complete with barbed wire fences, minefields, and control towers. As of 1985 none of these plans had been attempted. The high cost of erecting and policing such a barrier, the likelihood of its destruction by the *mujahidin*, and the lack of troops to man it made the plan impracticable.

FOUR MAJOR COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGIES

The Soviets followed four major military-related strategies to crush the insurgency: intimidation and genocide, reprisals; subversion; and military forays. Only limited success was achieved, and the

cost to the Afghan civilian populace was severe: between 3.5 million and 5 million Afghans fled the country; and at least another 1.5 million moved from the countryside into relatively more safe urban centers, like Kabul.

INTIMIDATION AND GENOCIDE By 1982 the Soviets seemingly had abandoned any attempt to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan public. Instead, they adopted an apparent policy of trying to cow and bludgeon the public into either submission or flight. The bombing of isolated villages with no strategic importance and the destruction of crops and livestock were examples of these methods. So, too, was the April 1983 "carpet bombing" of Herat, the country's third-largest city, with a population of 150,000. The bombing was "extremely heavy, brutal, and prolonged" and resulted in half the city being leveled and the deaths of an estimated 3,000 civilians.⁴⁸

The Soviet intimidation policy was evident by their on-ground, search-and-destroy missions in the countryside. After intensive bombardment of villages suspected of supporting guerrilla activities, tanks and armored vehicles would roll in to destroy the remaining earthen dwellings. Food stocks, wheat fields, livestock, and water wells systematically were destroyed so that the local population, deprived of the means of survival, would be forced to move away. A Swedish official, visiting a *mujahidin*-controlled area after one such sweep, reported: "Russian soldiers shot at anything alive in six villages—people, hens, donkeys—and then they plundered what remained of value."⁴⁹

Aerial-dropped butterfly mines, which maimed rather than killed, were widely used to intimidate the population (see page 147). Other intimidation devices included booby traps such as watches, pins, books, cigarette lighters, and even toys; these items were designed to maim those who touched them, apparently in an effort to discourage the local population from resisting the Soviets.⁵⁰

The ruling PDPA party, and presumably the Soviets, were not bothered that this policy caused so much destruction or loss of life. Afghan guerrillas cited the comment of a party official in Kabul who told a listener that "if only one million people were left in the country [of 15 million], they would be more than enough to start a new society."⁵¹

REPRISALS A marked increase was seen during 1983 in Soviet reprisals against civilians who lived in areas adjacent to insurgent activities. Guerrilla attacks against Soviet-DRA convoys often brought immediate bombing of nearby villages, destruction of cultivated fields and orchards, and execution of male inhabitants. In one particularly well-documented incident, Soviet troops entered a village 35 miles from Kabul, on 13 September 1982, and methodically massacred 105 of its inhabitants in a tunnel. Victims included women and 12 children. The Soviets forced the village elders to observe the massacre. Survivors fled to Pakistan.⁵²

In July 1983, in another widely publicized incident, the Soviets executed between 20 and 30 Afghan elders in the city of Ghazni in reprisal for the deaths of several Soviets.⁵³ And in October 1983 the Soviets killed at least 360 civilians in three villages near Kandahar in revenge for heavy Soviet casualties in local fighting.⁵⁴

SUBVERSION The Soviet policy that most troubled the resistance, beginning in 1982, however, was subversion. This policy included infiltrating informers into resistance groups, using assassins to kill resistance leaders, and trying to buy off Afghan tribes or guerrilla leaders. According to a political adviser to the Panjshir Valley guerrilla forces:

*The enemy is spending so much time in underground activities because they can't defeat us militarily. They are using secret tactics, long-term tactics to make us tired of fighting.*⁵⁵

So many deserters from the DRA army and young men fleeing conscription existed that screening the bona fides of would-be *mujahidin* was difficult. Amin Wardak, the leading resistance figure in Wardak province, told Western interviewers in March 1984 that his group managed this problem by accepting only deserters originating from his province whose antecedents could be checked. Deserters coming from other provinces were directed to go there if they wished to join local partisan groups.⁵⁶

Still, DRA infiltration had some success. DRA informers were credited with pinpointing hidden guerrilla positions in the Panjshir valley during the 1982 Soviet-DRA offensive. DRA assassins were believed to be responsible for the mysterious shooting of a leading resistance figure in Peshawar in 1981.⁵⁷



AP/Wide World Photo

BUTTERFLY MINE—Senator S.I. Hayakawa (R-Calif.), left, hosts a press conference in his Capitol Hill office in Washington, DC, with two leaders of the Afghan resistance: Sayed Ahmed Gailani, center, and Mohammed Hakim Aryubi. Aryubi is holding an anti-personnel (“butterfly mine”) explosive that the Soviets are dropping in Afghanistan.

A defecting KHAD secret police brigadier, however, reported that of six groups of DRA agents sent to Pakistan to infiltrate the resistance organizations, all were intercepted before they reached the frontier. They were intercepted, presumably, on the strength of inside information passed by resistance informers in Kabul.⁵⁸

Efforts to bribe guerrilla commanders and tribes had mixed success. When in 1980 the DRA Minister for Tribal and Frontier Affairs personally brought a previously agreed-on bribe of \$28,000 to a frontier tribe, in exchange for its cooperation with the Kabul regime, the tribesmen killed the minister and his two aides and kept the funds. Guerrilla commander Amin Wardak reported that several times the DRA sent emissaries to him from Kabul who offered him food,

supplies, and even weapons, if he would cease his guerrilla activities and sever ties with other resistance organizations.⁵⁹

Some of these subversion efforts were successful, however. Another guerrilla commander in Wardak province, affiliated with the Peshawar-based Sayaf-led organization, defected to the DRA on receiving a bribe. But most of his men would not follow him and joined another local partisan group. A number of Pakistan-border tribes did cooperate from time to time with the government in return for generous money payments. Among these were the Shinwari tribe in Nangarhar province and the Ismaelkhel and Mandizi tribes in Paktia province.⁶⁰

Another sometimes successful subversion policy was to persuade villages near a Soviet-DRA-guarded urban center or military base to enter into a truce. The male inhabitants then would be persuaded to form highly paid militia units to maintain law and order in their village area. Successful examples of this policy were seen in two strategic areas in Baghlan and Parwan provinces, which straddle the important north-south highway between Kabul and the Soviet Union.⁶¹

In fact, a combination of subversion activities in Parwan province was so successful that a visiting Western correspondent reported in 1983 that the resistance movement had all but come to a standstill in that province.⁶²

SOVIET COMBAT TACTICS

In their military attempt to crush the resistance, the Soviets used a variety of tactics, but none was totally successful. Part of the problem was that modern Soviet military doctrine apparently had never paid much attention to counterinsurgency tactics. The Soviets were unfamiliar with dealing with guerrillas, despite a decade-long history of fighting internal rebels in the 1920s. Furthermore, they were inexperienced in mountain warfare. Soviet doctrine seemed based on warfare in flat country where masses of motorized armored vehicles could maneuver. Footslogging over mountains obviously was little practiced.

The Soviet military also was constrained by domestic political considerations. The fiction was to be maintained that few Soviet troops were in Afghanistan. Soviet casualties were to be kept to a

minimum; and when they occurred they were to be hidden from the Russian public.

With these considerations and constraints in mind, some experimentation in counterinsurgency tactics was attempted. Over the five years the main tactics tried were the following:

- **HEAVY USE OF AERIAL WARFARE** The single greatest Soviet success was the use of the helicopter gunship. In fact, Soviet reliance on helicopters probably was the most significant military development to come out of this war. According to an Israeli military analyst, extensive use by the Soviets of helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft in counterinsurgency operations was an operational practice not previously known to exist in the Soviet army.⁶³

Among the most commonly used aerial tactics were the following: the use of the MI-24 Hind helicopter gunship in a variety of tasks; use of fixed-wing aircraft for massive, concentrated bombings; and dropping small butterfly mines on fields and passes. By 1983 *mujahidin*-manned heavy machine guns were starting to take their toll against some helicopters. One result of this effectiveness was that the Soviets were flying much higher and thus were somewhat less effective.

- **SWEEP AND DESTROY** During the first two years of the war, Soviet combat tactics relied heavily on sending armored columns of tanks and armored infantry vehicles up rural dirt roads to fire on villages or suspected guerrilla hideouts. Soviet infantry soldiers, riding behind armor plating, rarely dismounted, however; and when they did they never ventured far from their vehicles. These columns of armored vehicles usually were accompanied by bombers and helicopters, which would bomb and shell villages. While much property damage occurred from this sweep-and-destroy tactic—and Soviet casualties were kept low by little exposure of infantry—few guerrillas were killed. Said one guerrilla commander: “most of the time they meet us in their armored vehicles. They seldom go into battle against us as infantry.”⁶⁴

- **ENCIRCLEMENT** In 1982 a new tactic was tried. It consisted of encircling or cordoning off a particular area, typically a cluster of villages in a flat area, or a valley cradled by mountains. Once an area was encircled or blocked, the joint Soviet-DRA units

would close in, combing the area for guerrillas or DRA army deserters.⁶⁵

Success depended on favorable terrain and good execution. The Soviets, however, rarely seemed able to achieve surprise. Often, too, the rugged terrain made it difficult to close the net successfully.

The basic Soviet unit used for encirclement counterinsurgency operations was the motorized rifle battalion; this unit was composed of three companies of infantry, usually equipped with BMPs (in Russian, *Boevaya Mashina Pekhota*, mechanized infantry combat vehicles), a mortar battery, and a communications platoon.⁶⁶

● **RELIANCE ON THE DRA ARMY** In the first year of their direct involvement, 1980, the Soviets generally preferred to play a supporting role behind the DRA army during sweep-and-destroy operations. This tactic failed. The miserable performance of members of DRA army units, who usually fought with reluctance and often deserted in large numbers, compelled the Soviets by 1981 to play the primary assertive role. While combined Soviet-DRA operations still were the rule in sweep-and-destroy and encirclement operations by 1983, the Soviets almost always played the principal fighting role.

● **AIRBORNE TROOP STRIKES** In 1982, and especially in 1983 and 1984, the Soviets occasionally landed commandos by helicopter in resistance-held areas. This tactic was designed either to wipe out suspected insurgent strongholds and then withdraw, or to establish a permanent blocking post. Examples of these tactics were the following: helicopter landings of Soviet airborne troops in Kunduz and Balkh provinces in late 1983; and establishing a permanent Soviet blocking post on the strategic Anjoman Pass connecting the Panjshir Valley with Badakhshan province in 1982.

Heliborne operations appeared to be carried out by special Soviet air assault brigades. At least one such unit, and possibly five different such units, saw action through 1983.⁶⁷

● **LIGHTER AND SMALLER FORMATIONS** In 1982 Soviet military literature, without citing Afghanistan by name, gave prominence to a policy of increasing decentralization and more emphasis on light infantry use. Reliance on armored vehicles was to be reduced, infantry was to be given a greater role, and better mountain

fighting tactics were declared necessary. Rapid development, flexibility, and surprise were stressed.⁶⁸

By the end of 1983 some of these tactics were being tried, but with mixed success. While the Soviets were improving their counter-insurgency techniques, so too were the partisans improving theirs; and, in addition, the *mujahidin* were becoming better armed.

● **CLEARING THE TERRAIN NEAR HIGHWAYS** In late 1981 the Soviets systematically began clearing trees, orchards, walls, and houses located within 150 or 200 meters of either side of main highways used by Soviet convoys. This action caused many farmers and villages economic anguish; but the Soviets obviously reckoned that it reduced the possibility of ambush.

● **CONVOYS** The use of immensely long convoys (often more than a kilometer, almost a mile, in length) of trucks and tanker vehicles, guarded by escorting tanks and armored wheeled vehicles, was a typical feature of the war. These long convoys moved only by daylight—usually between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Typically, a column was led by several tanks or armored vehicles, with several more following in the rear. The ratio of armored vehicles to trucks commonly



Photo courtesy Committee for a Free Afghanistan

Ambushed Soviet convoy


was one armored vehicle to 10 trucks. Helicopter gunships patrolled overhead, particularly in mountainous areas where the threat of guerrilla ambushes was high. Other aircraft always were within call for airstrikes in case of guerrilla engagements. Despite these precautions, convoys often were attacked, roads mined, and bridges and culverts blown up.

MUJAHIDIN TACTICS

In the main, *mujahidin* tactics consisted of daytime ambushes of highway convoys, night attacks on fortified posts, and assassinations of DRA party officials and Soviet personnel. Sniper fire from insurgent rebels was a particular headache for the Soviets.⁶⁹

Where the terrain was mountainous, ambushes were more easily carried out. In open, flat areas where concealment was difficult, the *mujahidin* often limited themselves to assassinations.⁷⁰

In 1983 the use of land mines by the resistance became more common, along with blowing up electric power line pylons and bridges. The number of attacks, however, was severely constrained by the supply of ammunition, which usually was in short supply.

HE AFGHANISTAN WAR WAS ONE OF THE LONGEST-running foreign wars that the USSR had ever participated in; at the close of 1984 the end of this war was not in sight. Despite mounting casualties, probably approaching 25,000, the Soviets tried to hide from the Soviet public their extensive military involvement in Afghanistan. During the five years, the insurgency spread to all of Afghanistan's 28 provinces. Land area under Soviet-DRA control shrank to about 18 percent. The Soviets held all or parts of the country's 28 provincial capitals; but the resistance controlled the countryside.

The Soviets gradually increased their forces in Afghanistan from 80,000 men to at least 115,000 men, and experimented with a variety of counterinsurgency policies and tactics. But the resistance remained

determined and strong. Soviet and DRA forces lacked the 10-to-1 numerical advantage Western strategists often believed was needed to pacify an insurgency. Militarily, the war was a standoff, with each side unable to exterminate or expel the other.



Photo courtesy Committee for a Free Afghanistan

Mujahidin resting between sorties

2. Opposing Forces

We cannot hope for a military victory against the Russians. We must hold on and win a moral victory. It is our only hope. For this we must kill and be killed.

Guerrilla fighter, 1981

BALANCE OF MILITARY FORCES

THE BALANCE OF FORCES AT THE END OF 1984 STOOD at about 200,000 men on the Soviet-DRA side, and a roughly equivalent number on the *mujahidin* side. The Soviet contingent numbered about 115,000 men in Afghanistan and 30,000 to 35,000 in bases across the border in the USSR, while the DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) army and air force totaled between 40,000 and 50,000 men. Additionally, the DRA militia, police, and auxiliaries numbered perhaps 50,000. Soviet forces outnumbered regular DRA military by a ratio of more than two to one.

The DRA army itself probably contained 35,000 to 40,000 men, and the DRA air force numbered¹ at most 7,000. In addition to the two regular military services (Afghanistan has no navy), the DRA had supplementary paramilitary forces. These forces included the tribal militia, the regular police, the KHAD secret police, and the youth-manned Defense of the Revolution (civil defense) found in the larger cities. These supplementary security forces probably numbered about 50,000, bringing the total DRA security complement to around 87,000 persons.¹

Arrayed against the Soviet-DRA forces were perhaps 150,000 part-time and full-time *mujahidin*; of this total, possibly between 40,000 and 50,000 were more or less full-time fighters.² The Afghan resistance groups considered the above figures on Soviet-DRA and

resistance forces as too conservative. One Peshawar-based organization believed, in 1983, that the Soviets had 200,000 troops in Afghanistan and that the DRA army had little more than 15,000 men.³ The Indian and Yugoslav governments reportedly estimated the number of Soviet troops at 130,000.⁴

If one accepts the common military view that a superiority ratio of 10 to 1 is required to crush an insurgency, the Soviets and DRA were far from the point of being able to pacify Afghanistan. The balance of forces between the two sides was about equal, counting auxiliary security forces on the Soviet-DRA side and part-time fighters with the *mujahidin*.

DISTRIBUTION OF SOVIET FORCES Soviet army contingents were in all major cities and provincial capitals, at all airfields, and at strategic points along major highways, such as the Salang Pass tunnel on the main north-south highway. About one-third of the Soviet ground forces were based in the Kabul area.⁵ The three principal Soviet military bases were located as follows:

- **Dasht-e-Kiligai**, in Baghlan province, astride the north-south highway.
- **Bagram Air Base**, in Parwan province, 45 miles north of Kabul.
- **Shindand Air Base**, in Farah province, 60 miles south of Herat.

One section of the country, the 185-mile-long Wakhan Corridor in northeast Badakhshan province, was occupied militarily by the Soviets in 1980 and administered solely by them.

Soviet army operations in Afghanistan were believed to be headquartered in Kabul, while the Soviet air force operational command was centered in Termez, USSR, just across the border.⁶

Up to the end of 1984 no evidence existed of any special Soviet military build-up in Afghan border areas adjacent to Iran or Pakistan. Such build-ups would have suggested preparations for an invasion of those countries or an advance to the Persian Gulf. Though the Soviets had built or improved 12 airfields in Afghanistan, none of these airfields had, as of early 1984, the runway capability to permit use of the long-range Soviet Backfire bomber.

Soviet-DRA control was weakest in the 60-mile-long Panjshir Valley in Kapisa province, and in the two most mountainous and least populated regions: Nuristan, adjacent to Pakistan in the northeast; and the Hazarajat in the center of the country.

During their years of occupation, the Soviets paid much attention to improving the country's airports and heliports which they controlled. Soviet soldiers almost exclusively guarded the major airports. Much of Bagram Air Base—where many senior Soviet officers were quartered and which harbored the Soviet satellite communications system—was off limits to Afghans of any persuasion. So also was much of Shindand Air Base and some other airfields.⁷

A deserting Afghan soldier who had been stationed at Kandahar airport reported that the airport's perimeter was encircled by barbed wire, with machine gun posts every 100 meters manned solely by Soviet soldiers. Only a symbolic Afghan army presence was maintained at the main airport entrance.⁸

SOVIET-DRA MILITARY AIRCRAFT The Soviets kept some 300 fixed-wing tactical aircraft and transports and more than 600 helicopters in Afghanistan. The small DRA air force consisted of about 150 fixed-wing, mostly Soviet-built aircraft (many of them obsolete), and about 30 helicopters.

Probably for fuel and security reasons, the Soviets launched many of their air strikes against resistance forces from the USSR itself. This tactical point was attested to by many northern Afghan guerrilla commanders, and by a defecting senior Afghan secret police officer.⁹

A petroleum pipeline was constructed from the Soviet border to *Pul-i-Khumri* in Baghlan province, 80 miles south of the border. But it fell short of the Salang Pass. This shortfall meant that fuel for aircraft and motor transport based south of the Hindu Kush mountains, such as at Bagram, Kabul, and Shindand bases, had to be transported by tanker trucks. These trucks often were ambushed and the pipeline sabotaged, leading occasionally to severe petrol shortages in Kabul and other towns.

CASUALTIES AND EQUIPMENT LOSSES FROM THE GUERRILLA WAR

SOVIET LOSSES The Soviets were very sensitive about revealing losses of any kind suffered in the Afghan war. No casualty lists and virtually no names were publicly released. The first admission that a Soviet soldier had been killed occurred only in September 1981; and thereafter no more than a handful of Soviet casualties was mentioned. By the end of 1983 only 12 Soviet soldiers had been identified as casualties (six killed, six wounded) after four years of fighting.¹⁰

To hide the existence of casualties, the Soviets initially evacuated most of their wounded to Eastern Europe.¹¹ Later, as casualties mounted, the Soviets were compelled to convert two schools in Tashkent in Soviet Central Asia into military hospitals.¹²

To hide casualties further, the Soviets stopped shipping bodies back to the Soviet Union, supposedly burying them in Afghanistan. This tactic presumably was taken because the number of coffins might draw comment; and also the Russian family custom of viewing the dead before burial might draw attention to the war.¹³

The Soviet penchant for hiding casualties is illustrated by the experience of a Swedish journalist who traveled behind the lines in Afghanistan in the winter of 1983-1984. On returning to Stockholm, he phoned a Soviet couple in the USSR to inform them that their prisoner-of-war son, held by the resistance in Afghanistan, was alive in December 1983 but probably would not be able to return home soon. The Russian parents said that they had not even known their son was in Afghanistan, much less that anything had happened to him. His last letter to them was dated August 1983 and was stamped "field post."¹⁴

The US Government estimated that through 1984 the Soviets suffered casualties of between 20,000 and 25,000 (one-third killed), a rate of 4,000 to 5,000 casualties per year.¹⁵ Estimates of Soviet casualties by resistance groups were much higher, as much as 50,000.¹⁶ In addition, at the end of 1983 some 100 Soviet soldiers were prisoners of war or deserters cooperating with the *mujahidin*.¹⁷

The fact that the Soviets sometimes experienced considerable casualties was confirmed by Western newsmen traveling in

resistance-held areas. In January 1981 an Italian correspondent wrote: "you can see piles of identity cards taken from the corpses of Russian soldiers."¹⁸

To the 4,000 to 5,000 annual casualty rate of dead and wounded should be added at least another 5,000 men per year incapacitated by serious diseases, especially hepatitis, pneumonia, and typhoid.¹⁹ In October 1980 Soviet authorities in Kabul told a British correspondent that the Soviets had lost more soldiers from disease than from the fighting.²⁰ A Soviet soldier flown to Moscow to recuperate from hepatitis reported that 20 percent of his unit was dead, wounded, or ill.²¹ A Soviet soldier defector estimated in February 1984 that more than half of Soviet soldier deaths in Afghanistan had been from disease or negligence by the military unit commanders.²²

This trend would suggest a total annual Soviet rate of incapacitation or losses of between 10,000 and 20,000 in 1982-83, assuming conservatively that half of all Soviet units were not engaged in combat. Medical care for wounded Soviet soldiers apparently was poor. A Moscow physician in his 20s reported the following in mid-1982:

*The standard of medical care for the wounded in Afghanistan is very low, judging from what I heard from a former fellow student (a Russian) now working in a Tashkent military hospital. The level of hygiene at field medical stations is very poor, and the provisions made for evacuating the wounded are appalling. Soldiers are still lying in field hospitals a week after receiving serious wounds. Due to the absence or shortage of antibiotics, many die of their wounds in the hospitals. Wounded limbs are often automatically amputated, even when the injury is relatively slight. There is an enormous number of unjustified amputations. A frequent cause of death is accidents with poison gas and napalm.*²³

SOVIET PRISONERS OF WAR AND DESERTERS

During the early period of the war, from 1980 through much of 1981, no Soviet prisoners of war (POWs) were known to exist. Those captured by the *mujahidin* always were killed. Then, in June 1981, a captured Soviet MIG fighter pilot was brought to Pakistan by resistance fighters for publicity purposes; but Pakistani authorities swiftly

returned him to the Soviets.²⁴ The Pakistanis never again returned a Soviet prisoner or defector who came to Pakistan.

In late 1981 Western correspondents learned of the existence of three Soviet POWs in Afghanistan. Then in 1982 many more POWs surfaced, among them confessed deserters. Also in 1982 two Soviet POWs were taken to Iran where Iranian authorities, like the Pakistanis in 1981, promptly turned them over to the Soviets.²⁵

In that same year (1982) the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) became interested in the Soviet POWs. The ICRC worked out an agreement among the DRA regime, the Soviet Union, Pakistan, Switzerland, and the Afghan resistance, through which Soviet POWs held by the resistance would be taken to Switzerland for two years or until the war ended, whichever came first. At the end of their internment the Swiss government would turn the prisoners over to the ICRC for repatriation.

In response to concerns about forcible repatriation, the ICRC gave assurances in February 1983 that it would not force any internee to return to the Soviet Union against his will. In July 1983 one of eight Soviet prisoners then interned in Switzerland escaped to West Germany where he sought political asylum. Another Soviet soldier arrived in Switzerland in October 1983, raising the complement again to eight. In 1984 three of the Soviet soldiers interned in Switzerland were released. One returned to Moscow, but two others chose to accept asylum in Switzerland.²⁶

In addition to Switzerland, the United States and the United Kingdom each accepted, in 1983 and 1984, a pair of Soviet POWs as asylum cases—but with mixed success. Three of the four soldiers found adjustment to their new country too difficult; before the end of 1984 one of the asylum cases in the United States and the two in England were repatriated to the USSR. Moscow authorities portrayed them "in a heroic light as having withstood pressures to betray the Soviet Union."²⁷ British newspapers later reported that the two Soviet soldiers who returned from England were executed.

During 1983 the number of Soviet POWs increased. In early 1983 the number of known Soviet POWs in Afghanistan had grown to 30, some of whom were deserters.²⁸ By the end of the year the number had risen to between 60 and 300 POWs, at least a quarter of whom were deserters. Some 10 were believed held in a *mujahidin* prison in the Panjshir Valley, 18 in a prison camp in Kabul province,



Photo courtesy Committee for a Free Afghanistan

Soviet POWs

and about 50 in Pakistani border areas. Many of these POWs were fearful of returning to the Soviet Union. The number of deserters (mainly from Central Asia) who were serving with the *mujahidin* forces or living peacefully in resistance-held areas probably totaled more than 20.²⁹

Two Soviet deserters reported that they had been influenced to desert—apart from feelings of disillusionment—because of rumors circulating in Soviet camps that the *mujahidin* were no longer killing prisoners (other than Soviet officers), and that captured or deserting soldiers were treated well. They said that many Soviet soldiers, sick of their lot in Afghanistan, almost openly discussed trying to get captured.³⁰

Soviet POWs often were not killed, at least in the eastern and southern regions of Afghanistan, because the *mujahidin* realized that publicity in the world press about the existence of these prisoners would benefit the resistance cause.³¹

Not all Soviet soldiers captured in 1983, however, were accepted as POWs. At least three were known to have been executed in Nangarhar province after being held for several days by the

resistance. Also, *mujahidin* forces in the northern and western parts of Afghanistan found it logistically difficult either to keep Soviet prisoners in their areas, or to send them to Pakistan; hence, in those regions POWs were killed.

Altogether, from the beginning of the Soviet intervention through 1983, at least 1,000 Soviet soldiers and airmen were captured, but probably less than a fifth were kept alive.³² Those who were repatriated to Switzerland or the United States were the most fortunate.

DRA ARMY LOSSES Casualties suffered by the DRA army were estimated at 50,000 to 60,000 men over the first four years, plus probably 50,000 desertions.³³ The desertion rate was phenomenal. Said one *mujahidin* commander: "the (Kabul) army is becoming like a room with two doors. You go in through one and leave through the other."³⁴

Some of the desertion incidents were spectacular. For example, a DRA colonel defected in Kunar province with his entire garrison, some 1,200 men.³⁵ In 1982, when Soviet and DRA forces attempted for the sixth time to pacify the Panjshir Valley, some 1,000 DRA soldiers defected out of a total DRA force of 8,000 to 10,000 men.³⁶ The DRA army defection rate per year was at least 10,000 men.³⁷ On average, deserters fled the army within the first five months.³⁸

Compared with medical treatment given the Soviet wounded, the DRA wounded were discriminated against. DRA soldiers complained that after clashes with the *mujahidin*, Soviet wounded always were evacuated first. Further, the Soviets had a policy that, in general, wounded noncommissioned Afghan soldiers would not be brought to Kabul for treatment but had to make do in provincial hospitals. Some but not all wounded DRA army officers were given the privilege of going to Kabul. Even in these cases, however, they usually were subject to low-quality treatment in overcrowded hospital wards.³⁹

A glimpse of the military medical situation prevailing in January 1983 was provided by the testimony of a defecting retired Afghan general, Nek Mohamad Azizi, who had headed the Military Medical Academy prior to the 1978 coup. According to Azizi, 350 Afghan doctors had served in the military before the 1978 coup. By 1983, he said, this number had shrunk to 120, many of whom were recent medical school graduates with no practical training. Almost every

Kabul hospital had wounded soldiers. Of the three exclusively military hospitals in Kabul, one was reserved for Soviet troops and no Afghan was allowed on the premises. Another, called the "400-bed" hospital, held 2,000 patients; tents with 500 beds had been set up on the hospital grounds to handle the overflow.⁴⁰

A GLIMPSE AT DRA POLICE LOSSES In 1982 the resistance intercepted a report from the Kandahar provincial police chief to the Ministry of Interior in Kabul. This report gave a remarkable picture of the state of that security service. Of an authorized provincial complement of 319 police officers, the police chief reported that he had only 82. The others were killed or transferred without being replaced; and 338 of his 434 noncommissioned officers had been killed. Of 2,692 men in the police ranks, only 617 were left; of these, only 312 were fit for action.

The police chief complained that for the last two months he had received no arms, ammunition, or other material. All his vehicles had been destroyed. Coordination among various government agencies, he said, was almost zero.⁴¹

MUJAHIDIN AND AFGHAN CIVILIAN LOSSES If the medical situation facing wounded Soviet and DRA soldiers was poor, it was abysmal for the *mujahidin*. Unless *mujahidin* wounded could be evacuated to hospitals in Pakistan or be treated by the few teams of volunteer doctors and nurses, mostly French, working in *mujahidin*-held areas, the wounded received little or no treatment.⁴²

Consequently, many died from gangrene or loss of blood. Estimates of *mujahidin* losses were very tentative. Some sources claimed that they were lower than the Soviet and DRA losses combined; others estimated that they ranged from 50,000 to 100,000 over the four years from 1980 to 1983.

Afghan civilians fared no better. In resistance-held areas, virtually the only medical facilities available were the French volunteer and Swedish-supported medical teams. Even in DRA-held towns, a severe shortage of doctors, hospital beds, and medicines existed. Because of the fighting—and especially because of Soviet bombing and shelling of villages and towns—between 100,000 and 200,000 Afghan civilians were believed to have perished over the four years.

FEW AFGHAN PRISONERS For most of the period, neither side took many prisoners. Although the Soviets and DRA imprisoned some captured *mujahidin* to extract intelligence information from them, most of the time the insurgents were shot.

Treatment meted out by the *mujahidin* to captured DRA Afghan soldiers was selective. If those captured were suspected of being party members or collaborators, they were routinely executed. However, since most DRA soldiers were unwilling conscripts sympathetic to the resistance, they usually were released after screening. The system was explained by a guerrilla spokesman from the Panjshir Valley:

*Captured senior DRA army officers tend to be party members. By contrast, most Afghan soldiers are quite simply miserable country peasants or schoolboys who have been forced into uniform by the communists.*⁴³

SOVIET EQUIPMENT LOSSES US Government sources said that Soviet equipment losses probably exceeded \$2.5 billion through 1983. According to a respected American newsman's figures, the Soviets had lost the following equipment during the first four years of occupation: 546 aircraft, including helicopters; 304 tanks; 436 armored personnel carriers; and 2,758 other vehicles.⁴⁴

This estimate seems reasonable. A defecting Afghan air force officer reported that the Afghan air force had lost, through early 1984, 164 aircraft, including helicopters, and some 230 aircrew members.⁴⁵

The most spectacular *mujahidin*-inflicted toll against the Soviets occurred in 1983 when, according to an Afghan air force defector, the *mujahidin*, using SAM-7 missiles, shot down eight MI-8 helicopters in one operation near Khost in Paktia province. This success, which caused near panic among the Soviets, led the Soviets to equip their helicopters with decoy flare dispensers, a countermeasure that had some success.⁴⁶

A MONTH'S WAR TOLL IN A MAJOR PROVINCE Tallies of any sort are scarce in the public record. A French journalist who visited the USSR-bordering province of Balkh attempted to make a record for the time he resided there with resistance forces. His tally of losses for one month is shown in table 4.

Table 4**Losses in Balkh province in August 1982⁴⁷**

Soviet-DRA Losses	
Soviet-DRA military personnel killed	590
Soviet-DRA military personnel wounded	274
Armored vehicles destroyed	20
Other military vehicles destroyed	27
Helicopter shot down	1
Resistance Losses	
<i>Mujahidin</i> killed	126
<i>Mujahidin</i> wounded	10*
Civilians killed	346
Number seized for conscription	100
Number jailed by DRA	165

*The low number of wounded indicates that most of the wounded died from lack of medical care and were counted under killed.

SOVIET MILITARY FORCES

In conducting the Soviet-DRA side of the Afghan war, the Soviets made all the major decisions and ran the operations in the field. The following three accounts by Afghan army officer defectors illustrate this control:

- According to Colonel Mohammad Ayyub Osmani, who fled to Peshawar in early 1983, and previously had been working in Kabul in the Ministry of Defense, the Soviets completely controlled the Ministry; an estimated 2,500 Soviets and 3,500 Afghans worked in the Ministry. The Soviets countersigned all written orders. All Afghan military personnel, even those of general officer rank, were searched when entering the building.⁴⁸

- In December 1983 Colonel Mohammad Rahim, the defecting communications section commander of the 7th Army Division at Moqor, Ghazni province, told a similar story. Some 50 Soviet

advisers were attached to the 2,000-man division. According to Colonel Rahim, the Soviets were the real commanders of the division, as in all other DRA army units. Division orders always came through the Soviet advisers, who would reveal them only just before an operation was to start.⁴⁹

- An Afghan air force helicopter pilot, Lieutenant Mohammed Nassim Shadidi, who defected in early 1984, said that Soviet officers plan and command all Afghan air force operations from a command post in Termez, just across the border river from Afghanistan.⁵⁰

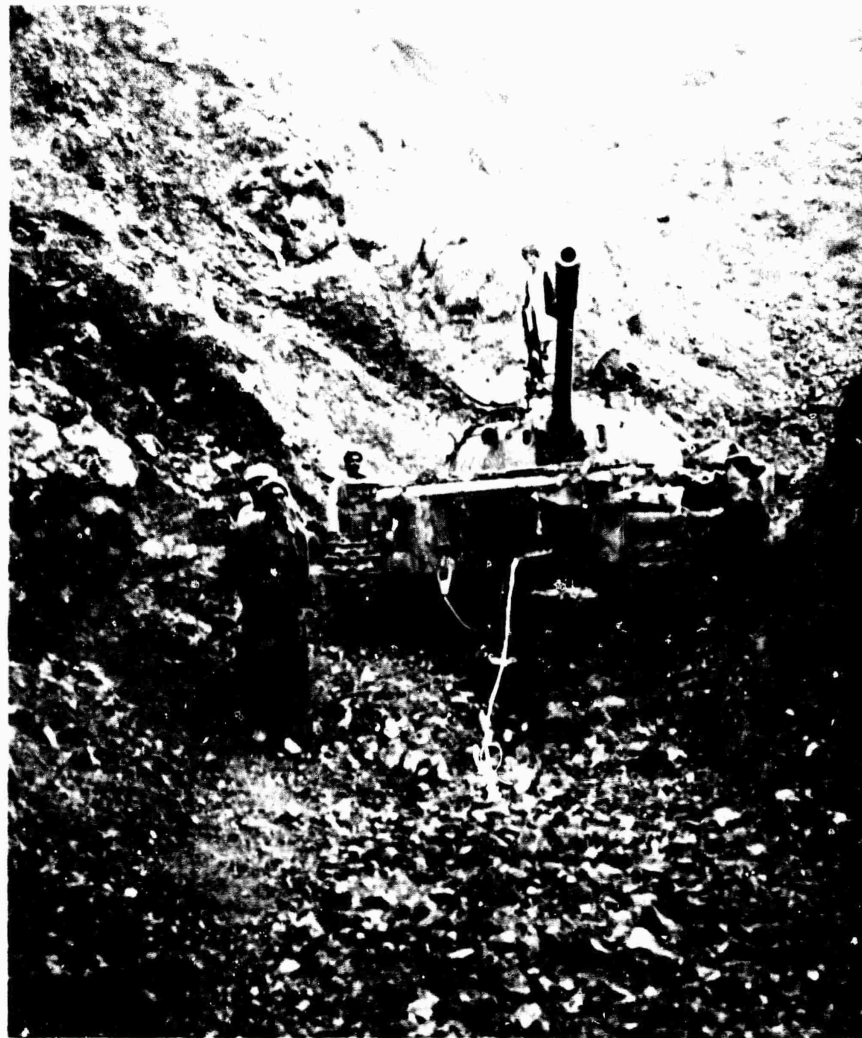


Photo courtesy Committee for a Free Afghanistan

Afghan guerrillas with captured Soviet tank

SENIOR SOVIET MILITARY PERSONNEL The Soviet military figure responsible for the pacification effort was Marshal Sergey Sokolov, Deputy Soviet Minister of Defense, who was based in Moscow. He visited Afghanistan at least once a year.

The name of the senior Soviet commander in Afghanistan itself never was publicly revealed. This lack probably was because his rank would have been inconsistent with the Soviet propaganda line that only a "limited contingent" of Soviet troops was located in Afghanistan.

According to an analysis made by Radio Liberty (Munich), the Soviet field commander from 1982 on probably was General of the Army Mikhail Ivanovich Sorokin, a 61-year-old officer with motorized infantry and airborne experience in Hungary and the Far East. He dropped out of public sight in December 1981 when he was replaced as Leningrad military district commander. He had just been promoted and an announcement was made that Sorokin had been given an assignment "in the field." Since the top incumbents of all Soviet field commands in the USSR and Eastern Europe were known to Western Soviet affairs experts, the surmise was that the only place a person of Sorokin's rank could have been sent was to Afghanistan. Two developments reported in the Soviet press indicated that he still was alive: he was decorated; and he had written obituaries (a prestigious privilege) for two prominent Soviet military figures.⁵¹

Ostensibly, Soviet units in Afghanistan were part of the Soviet 40th Army based in Tashkent. The 40th Army Commander was a General Petrovsky.

SOVIET MILITARY FORCES In line with the Soviet policy of playing down the presence of Soviet forces in the country, no figures ever were published by the Soviets or the DRA on the size of the Soviet occupation force. On 3 February 1980 DRA Foreign Minister Shah Mohammad Dost assured an international press conference that "the number of the forces is very small."⁵²

In October 1980 a British correspondent claimed that the Soviets told him in Kabul that their troops numbered between 40,000 and 45,000 men.⁵³ If so, these were the only figures ever disclosed by the Soviet-DRA side.

The initial Soviet airborne force that landed in Kabul on 24-27 December 1979 numbered about 5,000 men. By 1 January 1980 this

force, together with other invading Soviet troops elsewhere in Afghanistan, totalled at least 30,000 to 40,000 men. By 20 January 1980 the number had grown to 80,000.⁵⁴

In June 1980, on the eve of the Moscow Olympics, the Soviets announced, in an apparent propaganda ploy, the withdrawal of 10,000 troops from Afghanistan. Western intelligence sources estimated the number withdrawn at only between 5,000 and 6,000 men; these sources believed that those withdrawn were from antiaircraft, antitank, and missile warfare elements, all unsuited for the military situation in Afghanistan.⁵⁵

Even as these units were withdrawn, they apparently were replaced by new and more useful troops. By the end of 1980 the total of Soviet forces had leveled off at about 85,000 men, with another 30,000 stationed in the USSR just over the border.⁵⁶

During the next year (1981) the Soviets increased their occupation force by 5,000 to a total of 90,000 men.⁵⁷ In 1982, this number again was raised to 105,000, at which level it remained through 1983.⁵⁸ By the end of 1984, the total had risen to 115,000. This level represented about 4 percent of the total Soviet ground forces. Some 50 to 60 percent of Soviet forces in Afghanistan were combat troops.

The tour of duty for Soviet troops in Afghanistan varied, with most conscripts serving from one-and-a-half to two years.⁵⁹ Between 400,000 and 600,000 Soviet soldiers were estimated to have been rotated in and out of Afghanistan over the five-year period. Many Soviet conscripts were sent directly to Afghanistan without basic training; their training was to be done at Soviet bases in Afghanistan.⁶⁰

For ambitious Soviet army officers, service in Afghanistan was welcome and well rewarded. They received 700 to 800 rubles per month instead of their usual pay of 150 rubles. In addition, for each year they served in Afghanistan, three years were counted toward retirement. Winning military decorations also brought additional pay.⁶¹

In 1982 some Soviet officers who came in with the invasion force were still in Afghanistan; they already had served over two years in country.⁶²

SOVIET TROOP UNITS Soviet troops in Afghanistan nominally were attached to the Soviet 40th Army headquartered in Soviet Central Asia. In December 1979 the invasion force was identified by

Western military analysts as containing elements of nine Soviet army divisions: the 5th, 54th, 103rd, 104th, and 105th airborne guards divisions; and the 66th, 201st, 357th, and 360th motorized rifle divisions.

By the end of 1983, four years later, Pakistani and some Western sources believed that elements of 12 Soviet divisions were present: two airborne, and 10 motorized infantry divisions. The airborne guards divisions were the 104th and 105th; the motorized infantry divisions were the 16th, 54th, 66th, 103rd, 201st, 225th, 275th, 305th, 357th, and 360th. In addition, some independent smaller units, such as the 70th motorized rifle brigade, were present.⁶³

INITIAL USE OF CENTRAL ASIAN TROOPS An interesting feature of the original Soviet invasion force was that it possibly consisted of 30 to 40 percent Central Asian soldiers, many of whom had been born to Moslem families. The use of non-Russian ethnic soldiers in areas where these soldiers had ethnic, linguistic, or religious ties to the population under attack was a departure from the usual Soviet practice.⁶⁴

Two explanations probably cover this departure: **First**, for reasons of economy and logistics, the Soviets chose for the invasion force the units closest to Afghanistan, those based in Soviet Central Asia. **Second**, the Soviets may have believed they would gain a political advantage by sending troops of similar ethnic and religious background to the Afghans. Instead, the Soviet authorities soon discovered that many of the Central Asian troops showed sympathy with the Afghans. A defecting Soviet KGB major, Vladimir Kuzichkin, later explained:

*They (the Central Asian soldiers) were supposed to make our intervention go more smoothly. Instead, it was an error. . . . They showed little interest in fighting "their neighbors."*⁶⁵

By mid-1980, most Central Asians had been replaced by ethnic Russians and Ukrainians.⁶⁶

Central Asian troops were poor fighters, in part because most had received only rudimentary combat instruction. The lack of fighting skills long antedated the invasion of Afghanistan. For many years, most Central Asian conscripts were segregated into non-combat construction units and given only the most basic military

training. By contrast, elite Soviet combat units were drawn almost exclusively from the Slavic population. No known combat division existed in which the majority of recruits was from ethnic minorities. The Central Asian soldiers in Afghanistan in the early months of 1980 probably were from non-combat construction battalions hastily assigned to the invasion force.⁶⁷

After the Central Asian military units were withdrawn, an occasional Soviet soldier from that area still was to be found in Afghanistan. An Afghan soldier of *Uzbek* ethnic origin, who defected to Pakistan in 1981, told an interesting story in this regard. He said that while serving at Kandahar airport he had become friendly with a Soviet *Uzbek* soldier with whom he could converse in the *Uzbek* tongue. The Soviet soldier complained to him that although he and his fellow Central Asian soldiers wore Soviet uniforms, they were not allowed to move freely about the airport, as were ethnic Russians. He also confided that when he and other Central Asians engaged in fire fights with *mujahidin*, they deliberately aimed their rifles inaccurately.⁶⁸

SOVIET WEAPON SYSTEMS

The Soviets in Afghanistan used weapons that were standard with Soviet ground forces. These included T-72 tanks and 152mm self-propelled howitzers. But the weapons receiving most world attention were armed helicopters and chemical agents. While helicopters were widely used throughout the period, chemical agents were used selectively and mostly only during the first three years.

The most noteworthy and interesting of the weapons used by the Soviets are described below.

● **ARMED HELICOPTERS** These aircraft were the single most significant weapon used by the Soviets in Afghanistan. Not only were they used extensively in combat roles, they were the most popular mode of transportation for Soviet forces in the field. They were employed in a wide variety of tasks: supporting attacking ground units; reconnaissance; spotting artillery fire; landing airborne units; moving weapons and supplies; and evacuating the wounded. Soviet helicopters almost always traveled in pairs.

Three types of helicopters were used: the **MI-6 Hip**; the **MI-8 Hook**; and the **MI-24 Hind**. The most feared was the MI-24 Hind armed helicopter or gunship. It carried a 12.7mm heavy machine



AP Wire World photo

DOWNED GUNSHIP—Afghan guerrillas celebrate the downing of a Soviet MI-24 Hind helicopter gunship near the Salang highway.

gun, four antitank missiles, and 128 57mm rockets. The MI-24 also could transport eight combat-equipped soldiers.⁶⁹ Until the guerrillas became equipped with heavy machine guns in 1983, they were virtually powerless against the MI-24 Hind. Among weapons the *mujahidin* constantly sought were rockets or cannon capable of downing it.

In carrying out air strikes, the MI-24 gunships often were used in combination with SU-25 fighter bombers or MIG fighters. When a guerrilla band was located, gunships and fighter bombers would be summoned in to bomb and strafe the target until the suspected guerrilla group was believed eliminated.

During the five years of 1980 to 1984, the number of helicopter sorties steadily increased. By mid-1981 three sorties per day was normal from many airports.⁷⁰ The helicopters were used not only in patrols and direct counterinsurgency operations, but also to supply beleaguered outposts. The MI-8 Hook helicopter could carry 28 to 32 passengers, and the large MI-6 Hip could carry 65 to 90 passengers.

Helicopter losses often were caused by factors not directly related to *mujahidin* fire. As much as 80 to 85 percent of these losses may have come from accidents. Most were due to pilot error but many also were from mechanical failures. The rugged terrain and often harsh weather caused severe problems; the Soviets also apparently suffered from inadequate instrumentation and insufficient pilot training. Night and adverse-weather operations almost never were attempted, even when air support was badly needed by Soviet-DRA troops in difficulty.⁷¹

At the end of 1983 more than 600 helicopters, mostly Soviet, were based in Afghanistan.⁷² Maintenance was done by the Soviets.

● **SUKHOI-25 FROGFOOT GROUND ATTACK FIGHTER-BOMBER (SU-25)** The SU-25 was a new Soviet aircraft that as of the end of 1983 was used outside the USSR only in Afghanistan. The Panjshir Valley guerrilla commander, Ahmed Shah Massoud, described it as having "fantastic power."⁷³

The SU-25 was a single-seat close-support combat aircraft equipped with 500-kilogram (1,100-pound) bombs and rockets, and a heavy-caliber Gatling-type machine gun. It could fly for long periods, dive steeply, and turn sharply in mountainous valley areas.⁷⁴

● **CHEMICAL WARFARE** During the first five years of Soviet occupation, repeated reports were made of the use of chemical agents. A *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent wrote in 1982:

During assignments to Pakistan and Afghanistan over the past two and a half years, this correspondent spoke to a number of resistance fighters and refugees claiming [use by the Soviets of chemical warfare]. Even skeptics regard these accounts as compelling. It is difficult to believe that simple nonliterate tribesmen could have any real prior knowledge matching the description of certain chemical agents so accurately.⁷⁵

Interestingly enough, reports of the use of chemicals in Afghanistan predated the Soviet invasion. According to the US Department of State, during the six months before the invasion, reports were made of at least seven instances of the use of chemical agents by units of the leftist-controlled DRA army.⁷⁶

Barely two weeks after the invasion, reports began to appear of Soviet use of chemical warfare agents in several areas of the remote

northeastern province of Badakhshan.⁷⁷ By the spring and summer of 1980 chemical attacks were reported in all areas of major resistance activities.⁷⁸

The most comprehensive and detailed accounts of Soviet use of chemical agents came from the US Department of State. In its first public report (22 March 1982) the US Government charged:

*For the period from the summer of 1979 to the summer of 1981, the US Government received claims of 47 separate chemical attacks with a claimed death toll of more than 3,000. . . . The reports indicated that fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters usually were employed to disseminate chemical warfare agents by rockets, bombs, and sprays. Chemical-filled land mines were also reportedly used by the Soviets. The chemical clouds were usually gray or blue-black, yellow, or a combination of the colors.*⁷⁹

The report concluded that "nerve agents, phosgene oxime, and various incapacitants and irritants have been used."⁸⁰ The second US State Department report (November 1982) said:

*The Soviets have continued the selective use of toxic agents in Afghanistan as late as October 1982. For the first time we have obtained convincing evidence of the use of mycotoxins by Soviet forces through analyses of two contaminated Soviet gas masks acquired from Afghanistan. . . . Reports during 1980 and 1981 describe a yellow-brown mist being delivered in attacks which caused blistering, nausea, vomiting, and other symptoms similar to those described by "yellow rain" victims in Southeast Asia. . . . We have now concluded that trichothecene mycotoxins have been used by Soviet forces in Afghanistan since at least 1980.*⁸¹

Though the Soviets and the Kacul regime angrily denied using chemical agents and accused the United States of supplying such weapons to the resistance, literally hundreds of corroborative eyewitness accounts were reported.⁸² Some of the more interesting or significant were the following:

- By March 1980 US satellites had photographed TMS-65 decontamination vehicles and AGV-3 detox chambers in combat forward areas. The TMS-65 vehicles were being used to decontaminate

battle tanks; and Soviet combat troops were observed lining up to enter AGV-3 tents.⁸³

- A Dutch journalist, Bernd de Bruin, published an eyewitness account of two chemical attacks in the Jalalabad area in June 1980. He filmed an MI-24 helicopter dropping canisters that produced a dirty yellow cloud. A victim was photographed after the attack. And the journalist himself evidently was exposed because he developed blisters, nausea, diarrhea, and stomach cramps from which he recovered only after 10 days.⁸⁴

- An Afghan refugee, a medical student, told an Italian journalist in early 1982 that in the Tashkent, USSR, hospital where he was studying in 1981, about 100 Soviet soldiers had been flown in from Herat, with symptoms of severe gas poisoning.⁸⁵

- In one incident, three dead *mujahidin* guerrillas were found in a firing position; this position indicated that the attacker had used an extremely rapid-acting lethal chemical that is not detectable by normal senses and that causes no outward physiological responses before death.⁸⁶

- In 1982 a deserting Soviet soldier described two types of gases; one was a "100 percent lethal" agent, used by Soviet troops. He reported use of toxic agents in the Termez-Salang Pass sector of the main north-south highway delivered by rockets and air-dropped canisters.⁸⁷

- In late 1983 the Director of the Dr. Mohamad Omar Shaheed Hospital in Peshawar, Pakistan, where wounded *mujahidin* and others were tended reported that most of the treated *mujahidin* had been victims of various gases used by the Soviets.⁸⁸

Despite the Peshawar hospital report, general evidence pointed to a significant drop-off in Soviet use of chemical agents during 1983. A US Department of State press release, dated 21 February 1984, stated:

*There appears to have been a diminution of attacks in Afghanistan. . . . The US has received several reports of Soviet chemical attacks occurring in 1983 but, contrary to previous years, we have not yet been able to confirm these reports as valid. For 1982, on the other hand, the US has strong evidence of several dozen chemical attacks in Afghanistan resulting in over 300 agent-related deaths.*⁸⁹

Reasons for the drop-off in chemical attacks only could be speculated. The most plausible reason was that Western exposure of Soviet use of chemical weapons and resultant international criticism prompted the Soviets to stop.⁹⁰

In 1984 the Soviets apparently resumed use of chemical weapons. They used them during the seventh Soviet attack in the Panjshir Valley in the spring. This attack impelled Ahmed Shah Massoud, the valley's resistance commander, to appeal to the outside world for supplies of gas masks.⁹¹

SOVIET MOTIVATIONS As for Soviet motivations for using chemical weapons, a number of explanations were advanced by the US Government and others. One explanation was that the Soviets had a long history of interest in chemical warfare—and that its selective application in Afghanistan (as well as in Laos and Cambodia) pointed to the country being used as a testing ground.⁹²

In this connection, the Soviets may have calculated that they might not be caught; or if reports of chemical warfare leaked, they could not be verified.⁹³

As for the suitability of chemical warfare, some experts pointed to its usefulness in mountainous and difficult terrain where conventional artillery and high-explosive bombs were not particularly effective. Also, chemical warfare had a certain terror effect, since it caused bizarre and horrifying symptoms.⁹⁴

INTERNATIONAL TREATIES Two international treaties restrict or ban the use of chemical weapons—and the USSR and Afghanistan are limited parties to one or both of them.

The *first* such treaty is the 1925 Geneva Protocol banning the use in war of chemical and bacteriological weapons. The Soviets are a signatory, with the reservation that they are not bound to the treaty's provisions with respect to non-signatory countries. Since Afghanistan is a non-signatory country, the Soviets could argue that the use of chemical weapons there is not in treaty violation.⁹⁵

The *second* treaty is the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention to which both the USSR and Afghanistan are parties. This treaty prohibits the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition, and retention of biological agents or toxins. It also calls for the prohibition of weapons and equipment to deliver such substances; the treaty additionally bans the transfer of such items to any

recipient whatsoever. Here again, although the Soviets denied using mycotoxins, they asserted that these substances (found in Afghanistan) are not living and hence are not chemicals. The US position is that all toxins, whether natural or synthetic, are prohibited by the agreement.⁹⁶

A shortcoming of both treaties is the lack of any verification provision.⁹⁷

UN INVESTIGATIONS UN General Assembly directives enabled the UN to make two investigations into charges of chemical warfare use in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia. The **first report** (issued in December 1981) was inconclusive, since the investigators were unable to carry out all their intended inquiries (including on-site visits to Afghanistan), because of Afghanistan's refusal to cooperate.⁹⁸

The **second report**, issued in the fall of 1982, cited circumstantial evidence of chemical warfare use. But it stated that the UN team's ability to investigate charges had been restricted to interviewing refugees in Pakistan.⁹⁹

BUTTERFLY MINES These mines look like butterflies or, better, like wing-shaped seeds of the maple tree. This shape allowed the mines to spin to earth slowly when dropped from the air. They were dropped in the tens of thousands on passes and around villages. They were painted green or brown to blend with the landscape, depending on the terrain. When detonated they were designed to blow off a foot or a hand, maiming rather than killing. Most of their victims were children or livestock. By 1983 the Soviets largely had stopped using butterfly mines, in part because the *mujahidin* had learned how to pick them up and use them against Soviet-DRA forces.¹⁰⁰

● **OTHER NEW WEAPONS** Among the most effective new weapons were the following:

The AGS-17 automatic grenade launcher, which is mounted on a vehicle or helicopter and fires 30 rounds of 30mm grenades.

The AK-47 high-velocity rifle (5.45mm), issued only to Soviet troops.

Flechettes, small pieces of razor-shaped steel that are distributed with shot-gun effect from fired 152mm artillery shells and cause nasty wounds.¹⁰¹

MAIN PROBLEMS OF THE SOVIET ARMY

Analysts examining Soviet military literature, and Western correspondents visiting Afghanistan, identified three major problems that the Soviets were unable to solve during the period 1980-1984. These problems are discussed below.

1) INAPPROPRIATE TRAINING AND TACTICS Soviet battle doctrine emphasized centralized heavy armored frontal attacks with large numbers of units. Soldiers were not trained to operate outside of their armored vehicles. The use of infantry patrols was rare. Junior officers were allowed little initiative and rarely took any. Guerrilla commanders often commented on how slowly Soviet ground forces moved and how ineffective they were in mountain terrain. The Panjshir Valley commander, Ahmed Shah Massoud, explained:

*Soviet soldiers are not trained very efficiently for mountainous countries. . . . They often went into combat laden with equipment and moving very slowly. This is why we could kill them very easily.*¹⁰²

*Even the Soviet crack troops do not show very great determination. In addition, they have too much equipment and that means they are not mobile enough.*¹⁰³

2) DEFICIENT EQUIPMENT Soviet equipment frequently broke down. Tanks and armored personnel carriers often were disabled in field operations, not because of *mujahidin* fire but because of mechanical failure. Soviet military literature blamed these field breakdowns on inadequate preventive maintenance, a lack of field repair skills among the soldiers, and poor driving. Some of the Soviet battle tanks were uncomfortable inside and unbearably hot in warm weather.¹⁰⁴

3) LOW MORALE The feature of low morale in the Soviet forces was the aspect most ignored or underrated by Western observers. The parallel between poor Soviet performance in the Finnish War of 1939-40 and in Afghanistan is striking in this regard. Cynicism, indifference, and shirking of professional duties were pervasive among Soviet soldiers.

For one, Soviet soldiers lacked motivation. Officer-soldier relationships often were poor. And many soldiers became disillusioned when they found no evidence of American or Chinese intervention.

as had been claimed by Soviet authorities. A remarkably consistent picture of low morale emerges from Soviet POWs in Afghanistan. The following comments from Soviet POWs are illustrative:

*—It's a ridiculous war.*¹⁰⁵

*—In Afghanistan, everyone gets demoralized almost at once.*¹⁰⁶

*—Nobody wants to fight; everyone wants to go home.*¹⁰⁷

*—What aggression? This is a complete lie. We couldn't find any evidence of aggression here; only the Afghan people who had taken up arms to defend their country.*¹⁰⁸

*—We were only ordinary soldiers with no great education. But we knew we were not fighting Americans or Chinese. What they had told us was not true. We knew that we were fighting the Afghan people. But even more important, we knew they were not going to invade the Soviet Union. They were only defending their country the way we in Russia did in 1941.*¹⁰⁹

*—We believed in our motherland. Why did they lie to us. . . . An ordinary Soviet citizen knows nothing of the war in Afghanistan. . . . We are not defending our country. . . . Many Soviet soldiers would like to flee the war in Afghanistan, but their families are back home and they could be victims of reprisals. . . . I was dumbfounded by what our army was doing in Afghanistan. We were exterminating a people.*¹¹⁰

BLACK MARKET ACTIVITIES AND DRUG PROBLEMS

Another indication of widespread low morale was provided by numerous reports of Soviet soldiers selling goods on the black market and consuming hashish. An Afghan resident in Kabul gave the following account in late 1981:

*The Soviet soldier sells anything he gets his hands on: petroleum, kerosene, equipment, windows, doors, military camp spigots, cables, generators, canned food, and automobile parts. I even saw—which will seem unbelievable to you—an armored troop transport vehicle for sale.*¹¹¹

A Soviet soldier defector told an interviewer in February 1984 that:

*Everything is for sale by everybody. . . . They (soldiers) sell literally everything possible: fat, butter, canned goods, soap, hardware, and arms and ammunition.*¹¹²

What Soviet soldiers usually wanted in exchange were Western and Japanese goods, especially blue jeans, watches, and hashish cigarettes.¹¹³

The drug problem largely was confined to use of hashish. A guerrilla commander in Nangarhar province said that he personally had exchanged a few hashish cigarettes with a Soviet soldier for a pistol. Speaking derisively of Soviet soldiers in general, he said: "if someone gives them a little hashish, they'll give him a Kalashnikov (rifle)."¹¹⁴ A Soviet POW explained why soldiers indulged in drugs:

*Hashish made us forget where we were. . . . Others smoked (hashish) as often as they could get it. . . . Some of us took spare engine parts from army vehicles and traded them with local Afghans for hashish.*¹¹⁵

A Soviet affairs analyst at Radio Liberty, Munich, discussing the low morale among Soviet troops, commented that many Westerners did not appreciate what a "rotten and corrupt" society exists in the Soviet Union. A Soviet soldier selling army goods on the black market in Afghanistan was only doing what Soviet soldiers and workers commonly did in the USSR itself. The analyst speculated that one reason why the Soviets had not significantly increased their troops in Afghanistan was from a fear that to do so would increase disillusionment among Soviet soldiers. This disillusionment later would spread among the public back home to the point of causing domestic unrest.¹¹⁶

CUBANS, BULGARIANS, AND OTHERS RUMORED TO BE FIGHTING WITH THE SOVIETS

During the five years, periodic reports appeared that other Soviet-bloc countries also were fighting against the *mujahidin* in Afghanistan. Those mentioned most frequently were Cubans and Bulgarians. Others cited were East Germans, Czechs, Ethiopians, Palestinians, and Vietnamese.

Only two of these reports seemingly were confirmed. A former Vietnamese army officer who defected in Bangkok in May 1984 told reporters that he had been one of 208 Vietnamese sent by Vietnam to

fight in Afghanistan.¹¹⁷ In June 1983 an Estonian underground newspaper published an interview with an Estonian soldier who recently had returned from service in Afghanistan. The soldier claimed that his Soviet army unit had talked with Bulgarian soldiers guarding the highway between Kabul and Jalalabad.¹¹⁸

The Cuban Foreign Ministry issued a public denial in 1980 that Cuban troops were serving in Afghanistan.¹¹⁹

DRA MILITARY FORCES

A major problem plaguing the Soviets was their inability to turn the DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, the Afghan government) army and air force into reliable, effective forces. Along with a persistent shortage of recruits, the loyalty of the officer corps and especially of the rank and file was in doubt. In a speech before members of the DRA army, on 12 August 1982, President Babrak Karmal lashed out against the army's failings: irresponsibility with weapons; ineffectiveness of some units; failure of officers to lead and inspire; and lack of cooperation between the army and other security organizations.¹²⁰

The poor fighting quality of the DRA army was described by two Soviet soldier deserters, who went over to the resistance in 1983, as follows: "(The Kabul army) was not an army, just a mess, with half the soldiers running away and the other half joining the rebels."¹²¹

DRA ARMY AND AIR FORCE

At the time of the 1978 coup the Afghan army numbered between 80,000 and 100,000 men, consisting of about 8,000 officers, 7,000 enlisted men, and 64,000 conscripts.¹²² During the 20-month rule of the Taraki and Amin leftist governments, before the Soviet invasion, the DRA army dropped to between 50,000 and 70,000 men because of desertions and purges.¹²³

After the Soviet intervention, the size of the DRA army dropped still further, reaching a low point of 25,000 to 30,000 men in the years 1981 and 1982. By expanding conscription and extending the military service of those already inducted, the number probably rose by the end of 1983 to between 35,000 and 40,000 men.¹²⁴

In one of the very few DRA statements on army strength, Defense Minister Abdul Qader claimed, in December 1982, that the army had 40,000 men.¹²⁵ Most of the soldiers were conscripts inducted for three-year terms (1983); these terms were stretched later in 1984 to four years.

The DRA army annually lost about 10,000 men through desertions, and another 5,000 from casualties.¹²⁶ Many defecting soldiers and officers testified to the decline in army strength. Colonel Abdul Manan, who headed the military engineering department of the army, stated in 1982, after fleeing to Pakistan, that before the 1978 coup his department had 1,300 workers. At the time he fled, its complement was down to only 200 men. Colonel Manan nominally was in charge of the department; but he said that the real power was in the hands of a Soviet colonel adviser.¹²⁷

The Afghan air force always was a much smaller service than the Afghan army, and its numbers, too, declined. While at the time of the 1978 coup the DRA air force stood at 10,000 men, it had shrunk by 1982 to 5,000 to 7,000 persons; few in the Afghan air force were allowed to fly aircraft.¹²⁸

DECIMATION OF THE AFGHAN MILITARY OFFICER CORPS

At the time of the 1978 coup, the army officer corps numbered somewhat more than 8,000 men, of whom about 600 to 800 were communists.¹²⁹

At that time, probably 40 to 45 percent of Afghanistan's army and air force officers had studied in the USSR. This sizable Soviet-trained group represented prime recruiting material for the Soviet KGB, GRU* (Soviet military intelligence), and the semi-clandestine Afghan communist party PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan). Although most Afghan officers trained in the USSR were not subverted by the Soviets or recruited by the PDPA, some 5 to 10 percent were. DRA Deputy Defense Minister Mohammed Nabi Azimi was an example of the PDPA's recruitment success. A Swedish correspondent who interviewed Azimi in 1984 reported:

(Azimi) is a Tajik, comes from an officer's family, and was trained at the Military Academy in Moscow. During vacations he traveled in the Central Asian republics. In Tajikistan he saw people with his same language and ethnic group with a level of

*Glavnoe Razvedivatelnoe Upravlenie (Chief Administration for Intelligence), a Division of the General Staff of the Soviet Army.

*education and standard of living far above those of the Afghan people—and only a generation before, the backwardness had been the same on both sides of the border. This made a great impression on him. He became a party member in 1972.*¹³⁰

When the Soviets intervened in December 1979, only 1,000 officers remained. Most members of the pre-1978 officer corps had been executed, purged, or retired. Four years later, at the end of 1983, the total reportedly still stood at only about 1,100 men. Few of these men had been officers at the time of the coup.¹³¹ Western military experts counted at least four or five purges of the armed forces since the April 1978 coup.¹³²

The purging began immediately after the coup, when virtually all general officers who had not already been executed during the coup were removed. Hundreds if not thousands of other officers suspected of being unsympathetic with the leftist regime were imprisoned or executed. According to a defecting army officer, Brigadier Mohammad Ayub Osmani, who had studied in Moscow at the Malinobov Tank Academy between 1974 and 1978, some 126 of the 282 Afghan officers who had studied at the Academy were executed.¹³³

KHALQ-PARCHAM RIVALRY CONTINUES After the Soviet invasion, and installation of the *Parcham* faction of the PDPA party in power, some officers identified as *Khalqis* were removed. Few *Khalq*-faction officers were allowed to command anything larger than a brigade. Still, *Parcham*-faction officers were in a minority. They were outnumbered by often disillusioned and alienated nonparty careerists and by *Khalq*-faction officers who bore grudges against the *Parchamis*. The DRA air force also had more *Khalqis* than *Parchamis*, but *Parchamis* held all the key posts.¹³⁴

As to the strength of the PDPA in the armed forces, Defense Minister Abdul Qader told a Polish newsman in June 1983 that "One serviceman in five is a member of the party."¹³⁵ Assuming generously that the army and air force totaled about 47,000 men, military party membership stood at about 9,000. This number probably is an exaggeration, since most party members reportedly were officers. According to a defecting DRA medical officer in 1983, a majority of officers still were not party members. Only some 200 (out of about 1,100) were. The others mostly were opportunists or resistance-sympathizing careerists.¹³⁶

INDUCEMENT AND CONSCRIPTION PRACTICES

The DRA tried carrot-and-stick measures to fill the ranks of its military forces. These measures provided the army with 10,000 to 18,000 new recruits per year in 1983, despite a 25 percent annual complement turnover.¹³⁷ Inducements included the following: across-the-board pay raises; bonuses for enlistments or extensions of military service; and amnesty (in 1980) to draft evaders or army deserters who would sign up.

In 1982 the DRA announced that high-school-age male students who volunteered for military service after completing the 10th grade would be granted a 12th-grade graduation certificate on release from the service. Students who enlisted after passing the 11th grade not only would be given 12th-grade graduation certificates on completion of their military service, but they would be entitled to enter any Afghan higher education institution without taking an entrance examination.¹³⁸

To those who would accept appointments as noncommissioned officers (NCOs) or officers, lucrative pay was offered, while standards of admittance were lowered. In fact, many post-Soviet invasion NCOs and officers apparently were illiterate.

Promotions, too, were accelerated to keep personnel in the army. A defecting army officer from the supply branch reported in 1983 that of 400 men in his Kabul unit 20 held the rank of brigadier general.¹³⁹

CONSCRIPTION The main measure used to fill the ranks of the army was conscription. The minimum conscription age was lowered several times and the upper age limit was raised. By 1983 all males between 19 and 39 were liable for induction. Exceptions generally were given only to the following: party members working in certain party activities; students who accepted scholarships in the USSR and Eastern Europe; and certain sole family-income earners. Because draft evasion was common the DRA resorted (in 1982-83) to army and police press gangs to search residential areas in Kabul for young males; many of these young men carried forged exemption documents. Reports were common of boys as young as 14 and men as old as 45 being impressed in these sweeps.¹⁴⁰

Another common DRA practice was to reinduct veterans who had completed their one-to-two-year compulsory military service requirement. These veterans were forced to serve through the now

three-year period. In March 1984 the three-year draft period was further extended to four years for NCOs and soldiers in logistic and maintenance units. This extension prompted a few mutinies and desertions among some Kabul units.

The aversion to joining the army was so great that in 1982 the graduating class of one Kabul high school reportedly saw 15 of its 60 male students flee to Pakistan.¹⁴¹ Hardly any male student entered Kabul University between 1980 and 1983, since those eligible had been drafted, had gone to the USSR for study, had fled to Pakistan, or had deserted to the *mujahidin*.

SOVIET DISTRUST OF THE DRA ARMY

The Soviets thoroughly distrusted the DRA army. They considered the Afghans unreliable, treacherous, and cowardly. In August 1980 the Soviets removed all antitank and antiaircraft weapons from the Afghan army; at one period Afghan tank crews were ordered to remove their batteries. In April 1981 the Soviets became so concerned about Kabul's security that they replaced some of the Afghan garrisons in that area with Soviet troops. For some time after the invasion the Afghan air force was grounded.¹⁴²

Afghan deserters reported that, while Soviet military advisers would trust Afghan party members to some extent, they regarded with suspicion Afghan soldiers who conspicuously practiced their Islamic faith.¹⁴³ Some examples of the pervading Soviet distrust of the DRA army follow:

- A defecting DRA army brigadier of the logistical branch, Mohamad Nawas, reported that the Soviets limited the DRA army to no more than a week's supply of material; the kind of equipment made available, he added, was determined solely by the Soviets.¹⁴⁴
- An Afghan air force defector who left Kabul in July 1983 said that all Afghans, including party members, were forbidden to enter "security zones" at airfields where Soviets were quartered and where aircraft were parked and military equipment stored.¹⁴⁵
- In the Afghan air force, Afghan pilots generally were not allowed to fly on their own. Soviet personnel formed part of most air crews and always were in charge.¹⁴⁶ A defecting Afghan air force helicopter pilot, Lt. Shadidi, said that Afghan air crews were informed only at the last moment of the nature of their operations and the location of targets. Normally, Afghan air force helicopters were

assigned to non-sensitive tasks such as providing overhead protection to Soviet-DRA ground convoys. A Soviet officer nevertheless always accompanied the Afghan helicopters and could countermand any order given by the Afghan nominally in charge.¹⁴⁷ Nonetheless, three Afghan air force planes were flown to Pakistan between 1981 and 1983: a MIG-21 fighter, a helicopter, and an SU-7 fighter bomber.

● The desertion rate was so high that DRA soldiers had to turn in their weapons when not fighting.¹⁴⁸ A deserting conscript with four months of service said: "We weren't allowed to carry a weapon when leaving our (front-line) post to relieve ourselves or fetch water."¹⁴⁹

The record of the five years also is replete with reports of mutinies and desertions. In 1980 alone credible reports were made of three mutinies, all of them crushed with the help of Soviet troops.

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION OF THE DRA MILITARY

Though Soviet military officers were in charge of the DRA military and ran the regime's military affairs, DRA Afghan military officers still formed a hierarchy. The most senior officers during the period 1980-1983 were as listed below:

- Supreme Commander: President Babrak Karmal.
- Minister of National Defense:
 - 1980 to January 1982: Lt. General Mohammad Rafi.
 - January 1982 through 1983: Major General Abdul Qader.
- Deputy Minister of Defense: Major General Khalilullah.
- Chief of the General Staff: Lieutenant General Baba Jan.
- Chief of Army Operations: Lieutenant General Khali.
- Air and Air Defense Force Commander: Major General Nazar Mohammad.
- Chief of Intelligence: Colonel Abdul Haz Samdi.

In May 1983 Deputy Defense Minister Khalilullah apparently got into a physical fight with Defense Minister Abdul Qader; as a result Khalilullah was put under house arrest and then removed from office. On 7 January 1984 a general reshuffling of several of the above key positions took place. Air Force Chief Nazar Mohammad replaced the retiring Baba Jan as Chief of the General Staff. Nazar

Mohammad, a member of the *Khalq* faction, was believed to be more aggressive and dynamic than his predecessor. Major General Ghulam Qader Miakhel became Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief of Army Operations; and Major General Nabi Azimi became first Deputy Minister of Defense, replacing the arrested Khalilullah.¹⁵⁰

ORGANIZATION The DRA army consisted of 14 divisions, 11 infantry and three armored divided among three corps. The authorized size of an infantry division was between 4,000 and 8,000 men. But during the years 1980-83 the average strength of an infantry division was between 2,000 and 2,500 men; the strength level of armored divisions was maintained at about 4,000 men.¹⁵¹

As was true before the 1978 coup most of the DRA army was located on an axis running from Jalalabad in the east to Kandahar in the southeast. Few troops were posted north of the Hindu Kush mountain range in the provinces bordering the Soviet Union.

The DRA air force consisted of about 150 fixed-wing aircraft and 30 helicopters, many of which were grounded because of maintenance and crew limitations. The fixed-wing equipment included MIG-17 and MIG-21 fighters, SU-7 and SU-17 fighter-bombers, and IL-18 and IL-28 bombers. The helicopter force contained MI-4s, MI-8s, and MI-24s. The air force also included Soviet-built transports and 12 Czech-built L-39 jet trainers. These trainers were the only non-Soviet-built equipment in the Afghan air force.¹⁵²

Only a small number of Afghan air force pilots, perhaps five to 10 at each airbase, were considered reliable enough politically to be allowed to fly strike missions against the insurgents.¹⁵³

When equipment used by the Soviet forces was compared with that used by the DRA services, the DRA was a "Cinderella" force (suffering undeserved neglect). Generally, the DRA army was equipped only with light weapons. Most battle tanks and artillery used in counterinsurgency operations were manned by Soviets.

AFGHAN ARMY MILITARY TRAINING

DRA army military training greatly deteriorated after the 1978 coup, and got worse, particularly after the Soviet invasion. The Soviet and DRA were so fearful of a total collapse of control over the country that they rushed Afghan officers and conscripts into the field after only rudimentary training. Before 1978 officers at the

Afghanistan Military Academy received their commission after three years of training. But after the Soviet invasion this training was shortened to two years. Some Afghan officers who deserted claimed they had only received three months of training.¹⁵⁴

For the common soldier, training before the 1978 coup normally lasted three to four months. In 1980 deserters reported that they had received just two months of training; they said they were allowed to fire their rifles only once in practice, using a single clip of ammunition.¹⁵⁵ In 1981 deserters told a Western correspondent that they had received only a week's military instruction and that each man had only been permitted to fire three practice rounds with his AK-47 rifle.¹⁵⁶

By 1983 the training situation had improved little. Deserters reported that their training time was one to two months; they said that they were not given rifles for practice but only oral instruction on how to use them. Consequently, when they reached their field assignments and were issued weapons, they did not really know how to use them.¹⁵⁷

Shortened training also applied to the police force. At the Kabul Police Academy, the 6 to 19 months of training given before 1978 now was reduced across the board to three months. Some 15 members of the academy's teaching faculty were Soviets, mostly teaching subjects connected with intelligence.¹⁵⁸

MILITARY TRAINING IN THE USSR Before the 1978 leftist coup, 3,750 Afghans had received military training in the Soviet Union, most of them officers. For more than a decade, between 100 and 400 Afghans had been sent annually to the USSR for military training. After the 1978 coup, and particularly after the Soviet invasion, these numbers greatly increased. The US Government estimated that in 1981, 5,500 Afghans received some kind of military training in the USSR and Eastern Europe.¹⁵⁹ In 1982 another source estimated that in that year 18,000 Afghan military personnel received training in the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁰

Little is known about this training. But in 1982 a captured DRA boy soldier revealed a remarkable Soviet practice—training Afghan children to serve as spies and saboteurs. In 1984 West German television featured one of these children, a 12-year-old who was a graduate of a three-month military course for 300 children soldiers in

a camp in Samarkand (USSR). The boy was described as being amazingly skillful at handling submachine guns, throwing hand grenades, and creeping up on an enemy. In Peshawar, the well-known guerrilla commander Abdul Haq said that over the previous six months his men had caught about 20 children soldiers, all between eight and 15 years old, trained by the Soviets for espionage and killing.¹⁶¹

DRA MILITARY BUDGET

After 1979, reliable figures on the DRA military budget were not available. In any case, the costs of running the DRA military establishment were to all intents and purposes financed by the Soviets. Before the invasion, in the fiscal year ending March 1979, the military budget was estimated at \$64 million, comprising 8.3 percent of the central government budget and a modest 2.7 percent of estimated gross national product.¹⁶²

In 1980, the military budget rose to \$208 million, and in 1981 to \$325 million.¹⁶³ In 1982 the Kabul regime reportedly claimed that defense spending came to 22 percent of total expenditures, allegedly less than the 26 percent level in the pre-1978 years. The discrepancy between these last DRA claims and the earlier fiscal year 1979 figures was not explainable.

DRA COUNTER-GUERRILLAS: THE *PADER WATAN*

In 1983 a new DRA unit appeared for the first time. Located in the Zari sector, the new DRA unit was called the *Pader Watan*, or labeled by some in the resistance "Traitors in Turbans." A guerrilla commander described this new unit as follows:

*Their men do not wear uniforms, but they earn much larger wages than the military. . . . Their leader, Ismatullah Khan [a former mujahidin leader], commands 250 men and claims affiliation with Islam.*¹⁶⁴

A *Pader Watan* unit was identified in at least one other part of the country, near *Pul-i-Khumri*. This unit was used to guard key points along highways used by Soviet-DRA convoys and to watch for night attacks and *mujahidin* infiltration.¹⁶⁵

More of an irritant than a serious threat, not much was known about them. They seemed very local.

CREATION OF MILITIA FORCES

To supplement its army forces, the DRA created at least two types of paramilitary forces: a provincial or tribal militia, and a teenage urban militia called the Defense of the Revolution. The groups totalled on paper 20,000 males. Defense of the Revolution units generally were assigned to urban security functions. The youths who joined were paid handsomely, roughly \$162 per month, a larger salary than a deputy minister received before the 1978 leftist coup.¹⁶⁶

These security forces were even more ineffective and unreliable than the regular DRA army. In Kabul, PDPA members often were called on to help patrol the city at night. But whether they were part of the Defense of the Revolution is not clear.¹⁶⁷

In the provinces bordering Pakistan, the militia generally was recruited from among small traders and non-tribal persons living in urban and semi-urban areas. When Afghanistan's forest areas came under resistance control, the wood-fuel business declined; firewood sellers and small traders lost their means of livelihood. Many chose to join the militia.¹⁶⁸

The ineffectiveness of the militia was evidenced by numerous accounts of militia-manned outposts cooperating with the resistance. Edward Girardet of *The Christian Science Monitor*, on his fourth trip into Afghanistan with the *mujahidin* in July 1982, reported that before reaching the Kabul River his group passed three DRA outposts or forts. One of his guerrilla companions assured him "they are no problem. They're like the *mujahidin*." Approaching a fort, his group met several soldiers (probably militiamen) drawing water from a well. "We all shook hands," Girardet said. Nearby, he could see other bored soldiers playing kick-the-can.¹⁶⁹

A year later William Branigin of *The Washington Post* had much the same experience:

*We ended up stopping for the night in the open within 50 yards of an Afghan government militia post. The militiamen, in reality working with the resistance, gave us each water and a hard-boiled egg for dinner. And when it started to rain around midnight, they let us come inside the hilltop post and sleep in a corridor.*¹⁷⁰

THE MUJAHIDIN

The guerrilla movement in Afghanistan was noticeably different from other post-World War II guerrilla movements. For one thing, the movement was politically overwhelmingly rightist; leftist *mujahidin* were almost nonexistent. Removing the Marxist Kabul government and its supporting Marxist superpower, the USSR, was what the military struggle was all about.

For another matter, no one resistance party or political coalition dominated the scene. Rather, the *mujahidin* consisted of 150 to 200 essentially independent bands, each usually operating within a clearly defined territory. For logistical reasons, most had a voluntary affiliation with an exile resistance organization based in Peshawar or Tehran. While the foreign-based resistance parties exercised little control over military operations inside the country, they played an important role as suppliers of arms and other aid (such as medical care in Pakistan) to their affiliated groups.

The *mujahidin* possessed notable strengths and weaknesses.

- Strengths were: high morale, widespread public support, and increasing military expertise.
- Weaknesses were: no central direction, often bitter rivalries among competing guerrilla groups, poor communication and coordination among the guerrilla bands, and limitations in weaponry.

The high morale repeatedly amazed Western newsmen who accompanied guerrilla bands inside the country. Despite widespread destruction of villages and much economic misery, the guerrillas were not discouraged; they were self-assured and determined to resist the foreign occupier and its puppet Kabul government. The guerrillas drew strength from the fact that local public opinion overwhelmingly was on their side. Evidence of this support was the ability of the *mujahidin* to blend into the population at large. DRA Deputy Defense Minister Mohammed Nabi Azimi told a Swedish correspondent:

*The enemy look like ordinary people. You do not know who the enemy is. It is not a regular conflict with face-to-face confrontation.*¹⁷¹

The first guerrilla groups were formed in 1978; since then their proficiency in guerrilla warfare has grown impressively. By 1981

visitors to resistance-held areas commented that the guerrilla fighters were much more adept than during the first years of the insurgency. A French doctor who served for three months with the *mujahidin* commented: "Wherever we went, we were struck by the smooth organization and effectiveness of the *mujahidin*."¹⁷²

Some of the guerrillas had evolved into full-time skilled fighters. Many of the *mujahidin* were familiar with small arms, having served once as army conscripts; and a few of the guerrilla commanders were former army officers. But almost none had received training in guerrilla operations. Most of the *mujahidin* learned their guerrilla skills by trial and error, often at fearful cost. They no longer operated in large numbers, but in small groups of 10, 20, or at most 30 under a single commander.

The availability of recruits was no problem—but the main constraint was finding arms for them. In the Panjshir Valley, a deputy to guerrilla commander Ahmad Shah Massoud complained in 1982 that their force had some 3,000 volunteers but only enough equipment for 700 persons.¹⁷³

Lack of coordination among guerrilla groups continued to be a major deficiency, but it was improving by 1983. Cooperation between guerrilla bands and affiliated exile parties in Peshawar also was much better.



Photo courtesy Committee for a Free Afghanistan

Mujahidin commander

Serious problems remained nonetheless. A deep political gulf existed between the Moderates and the Fundamentalists. While ethnic factors always had been important in Afghanistan, how the resistance movement had affected these historic differences was not clear. Some observers claimed that the historically dominant and largest ethnic group, the Pushtuns (42 percent of the population), would never accept national leadership by non-Pushtuns. But some of the resistance effort's best known guerrilla leaders were non-Pushtun. Others worried that the resistance movement was proving divisive, pointing to the ethnic Hazaras of central Afghanistan who declared they would insist on more autonomy in any post-Soviet future. Still others disagreed that ethnic divisions had increased, claiming that the resistance movement had become a unifying national force.

The age-composition of the guerrilla fighters drew criticism from some Western newsmen. One correspondent noted that only some 40 percent of the fighters were of fighting age—between 18 and 35—and that the rest were boys or older men. Such a mixture of age groups represented a handicap for a well-disciplined, effective fighting body.¹⁷⁴

WEAPONRY LIMITATIONS OF THE MUJAHIDIN

By 1983 the resistance forces were better armed than ever before. But adequate supplies of ammunition were major problems. The *mujahidin* still operated with essentially infantry-type weapons. At the beginning of the war, the fighters often were armed with nineteenth century British-made Lee-Enfield 303 rifles; by 1983 most of these old rifles had been replaced with modern Soviet-designed arms: Kalashnikov AK-47 rifles, bazookas, and light machine guns. Beginning in 1982 some heavy machine guns (12.7mm KshK and 14.5mm Zikoyak), mortars, rocket-propelled antitank weapons, and land mines were in evidence. The *mujahidin* had no artillery, and no airpower, however, and only occasionally a few captured armored vehicles.

Most of the *mujahidin* weaponry came from raids against Soviet and DRA forces or was brought in by Afghan army deserters. The larger, more sophisticated weaponry, such as machine guns, mortars and land mines, appeared to come from outside the country. For guerrilla bands located in the central or northern parts of Afghanistan, the problem of getting in outside-supplied weaponry was acute. To

reach the Panjshir Valley, arms convoys of pack horses and donkeys in 1984 had to cross at least four mountain passes at an average altitude of 15,000 feet. For more distant resistance localities the trip to or from Pakistan could take a month. Snow could block some passes for as long as three months.

But neither quantity nor kind of captured or supplied weaponry was sufficient to make a serious impact on the Soviets. Said a visiting Western correspondent: "a pathetically small quantity of weapons ever makes it over those perilous mountain passes."¹⁷⁵ Portable anti-aircraft weapons, effective against the Soviet MI-24 Hind helicopter gunship, was the most pressing single need. In the summer of 1983 a Western newsman visiting *mujahidin* operational areas reported:

*Everywhere I went the people told me the same thing: that they needed antiaircraft weapons. They said it was very hard to fight Russians on the ground with helicopters attacking them from above.*¹⁷⁶



Photo courtesy Committee for a Free Afghanistan

A band of guerrilla fighters:

Guerrilla bands that received Soviet weapons often complained of their ineffectiveness or unreliability. The heavy machine guns could not bring down the heavily armored MI-24 helicopter gunships nor could they be used against fast-flying Soviet ground-attack aircraft. The 82mm mortar rounds and SAM-7 rockets often failed to work.¹⁷⁷

SHORTAGES OF AMMUNITION Along with the lack of adequate antiaircraft weaponry, a pressing need was for ammunition. Said guerrilla commander Ahmed Shah Massoud: "that is our weakest point; we do not have a great deal of munitions."¹⁷⁸

According to a West German correspondent visiting Afghanistan in 1983, each guerrilla band had on hand only enough ammunition for six actions per year.¹⁷⁹

MUJAHIDIN MILITARY TRAINING IMPROVES

Well into 1982, foreign correspondents visiting the *mujahidin* were struck by the lack of professional guerrilla-warfare training available to the partisan groups. Nevertheless, DRA and Soviet allegations in 1980 and thereafter made reference to as many as 30 training camps existing in Pakistan, and as many as eight training camps each in Iran and the People's Republic of China.¹⁸⁰ Western sources discounted these allegations. But in February 1979, before the Soviet intervention, a Western newsman claimed that Afghan dissidents were training at a former Pakistan army camp.¹⁸¹

Although a good number of NCOs and officers once had served in the DRA army, few seemed available to give training to the *mujahidin*. "No one is interested," reported a visiting West German newsman in 1982. He described the guerrillas as a loose association of armed civilians to whom obedience meant little: "everyone is his own general." As for using their rifles, he stated "there is a lot of shooting but not many hits."¹⁸²

Most of the guerrillas were familiar with rifles, since conscription had been general for decades. But only a few had received instruction on larger weapons. This lack of instruction became painfully evident when a few SA-7 antitank missiles reached the *mujahidin*. The rebels did not know how to use them effectively, and a combination of inadequate instructions and poor quality weapons led to many failures.¹⁸³

Starting in 1981, and particularly during 1982, some steps were taken to correct these weaknesses. A Belgian correspondent traveling deep into Afghanistan wrote in late 1982: "groups crossed our path ... heading south to receive some elemental military training in the camps on the border."¹⁸⁴ A number of Peshawar-based resistance organizations had made arrangements to set up these clandestine training camps. These camps were staffed with former Afghan army guerrilla warfare experts, teaching skills to fighters selected by various groups within Afghanistan.

By the end of 1983 at least two and perhaps as many as 10 such training camps were situated along the border. The two best known camps were run by a former Afghan army colonel, Rahmatullah Safi. He had received commando-type training in the United Kingdom in 1973; he also had received training in the USSR and during the Vietnam War with US Special Forces. His two camps offered four-to-six-week courses for up to 400 trainees divided into two separate classes.¹⁸⁵ In addition to these border training camps, Ahmed



Photo courtesy Committee for a Free Afghanistan

A band of *mujahidin* rests by a snow field

Shah Massoud in the Panjshir Valley was running a two-month training course for his fighters and for some fighters from adjacent areas by 1983. His course included weapons-use training and close-combat instruction.

Some Western military experts believed that making available significant quantities of such weapons as portable ground-to-air and antitank missiles to trained *mujahidin* could have a dramatic impact on the Afghan guerrilla war. If nothing else, such weaponry would improve the morale of the guerrilla fighters.



WITH ONLY ABOUT 115,000 TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN, the Soviets did not have enough forces to pacify the country. After making allowances for garrison and security troops, the Soviets had only about one battalion in each province available for offensive operations. Western military experts felt that at least three times the present Soviet force would be needed to subdue the population.

Four reasons have been advanced for Soviet failure to greatly increase their forces in Afghanistan.

- One reason was that tripling the size of the Soviet military force would heighten international indignation over the occupation and draw more attention to a war that the Soviets wanted the world to forget.

- Another reason was that a larger force likely would raise the number of Soviet casualties, increase the demoralization of the Soviet army, and generate domestic unrest in the USSR.

- A third reason was logistical. The Soviets could not launch nor sustain a force three times larger than its present force without risking severe dislocations in the supply of goods and in the transportation system. The Soviet rail system already was overburdened, and a general shortage of trucks was a problem.

- The final reason was that an increase in Soviet forces to between 300,000 and 400,000 men dangerously would weaken (in Soviet eyes) their security forces in Eastern Europe and along the Chinese border. Consequently, the Western expectation was that the Soviets might increase their Afghanistan force by small increments

over the next several years but would not increase the total dramatically.

For the *mujahidin*, access to foreign-supplied equipment was critical to continued resistance effectiveness. Portable antitank rockets, heavy machine guns, land mines, and, above all, enough ammunition for all manner of light and heavy weapons were needed. Without such a flow of weapons and ammunition, the resistance likely would decline in time. And it might experience the fate of the suppressed *Basmachi* Moslem rebels in Soviet Central Asia in the 1920s.



Mujahidin fighters in Afghanistan

A mujahidin fighter

3. International Aid to the Resistance

The steady increase in the number and sophistication of weapons at the disposal of the guerrillas probably has been the most important factor in ensuring not only the survival of the resistance movement but also the steady escalation that has marked the war in Afghanistan the past three years.

*Aernoud Van Lynden,
The Washington Post
19 December 1982*

Thousands of witnesses can confirm that the U.S. is supplying arms to Afghan counterrevolutionaries. . . . This is no secret. Anyway, the U.S. does not conceal it at all.

*Sultan Ali Keshtmand,
Afghan Prime Minister
30 October 1983*

FOREIGN ASSISTANCE TO THE RESISTANCE

PRIME MINISTER KESHTMAND'S CHARGE IN 1983 THAT the US Government was assisting the resistance was nothing new. This theme had been used by successive leftist Afghan governments since armed resistance first broke out in 1978, well before the Soviet invasion. In addition to the United States, the charge of foreign interference also encompassed the People's Republic of China (PRC), Egypt and other Arab countries, and Pakistan; all of these countries were alleged to be carrying out an "undeclared war" against Afghanistan.¹

This convenient accusation for the Kabul regime served the following two propaganda purposes:

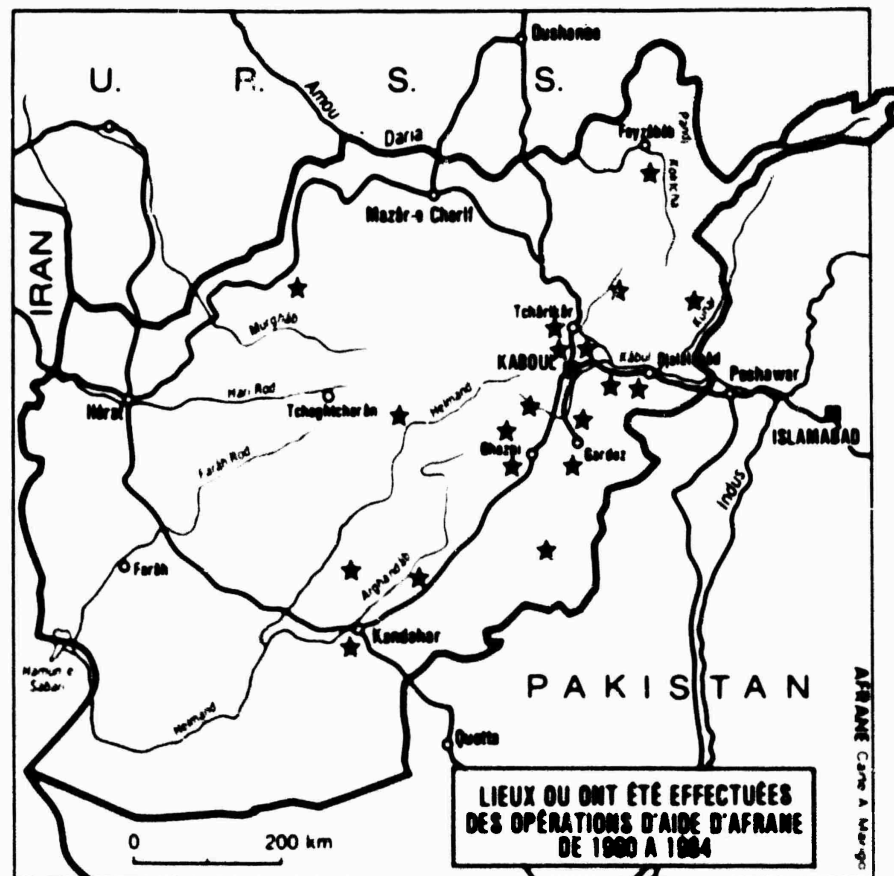
- It sought to explain the resistance as solely foreign inspired and sustained.
- It provided the excuse for Soviet troops to remain in Afghanistan.

Assistance to the resistance took various forms—and was both overt and covert. Many voluntary private groups in Western Europe and the United States, and some too in Pakistan and India, openly supported the resistance movement. This open support was of two kinds—material support to the refugees or to people in resistance-held areas inside Afghanistan; and public relations support designed to keep the world apprised of developments in Afghanistan.

In July 1981 a Paris publication reported the existence of 15 private committees in 10 countries helping the Afghan cause, and 17 international volunteer agencies providing humanitarian relief.² In January 1982 an American publication listed 45 private groups in eight countries devoted to the Afghan resistance, 26 of which were in the United States.³ In March 1983 the same Paris publication listed no fewer than nine Western European newsletters or other periodicals devoted solely to events in Afghanistan.⁴

This open support took such forms as the following: private French assistance to Radio Free Kabul; medical help by French and Swedish organizations to Afghans in resistance-held areas; and surgical hospitals in Peshawar and Quetta, Pakistan, run by the Swiss-based International Committee of the Red Cross to treat wounded resistance fighters. Also openly provided was massive international aid to Afghan refugees in Pakistan, mostly coming from the US Government and the United Nations.

Of all the Western countries, France seemingly was the most interested in Afghanistan. Three Paris-based private medical organizations dispatched doctors and nurses to resistance-held areas. Two other Paris groups—AFRANE (Amities Franco-Afghane; see the map on page 201) and the Bureau International Afghanistan—were active in a wide variety of endeavors; these endeavors included sending humanitarian aid behind the lines, sponsoring conferences in Europe, and publishing periodicals.



Map courtesy: AFRANE

★ Indicates sites where operations took place during 1980-84 with the aid of AFRANE (*Amitiés Franco-Afghane*).

In the United States, five private groups were active during the period 1980-83: Committee for a Free Afghanistan (Washington, DC); American Aid for Afghans (Portland, Oregon); and three New York-based groups: Afghan Relief Committee, Freedom House, and Afghanistan Council of the Asia Society. In 1984 a sixth organization, Federation for American Afghan Action (Washington, DC), also was active.

According to news accounts, covert financial and arms aid also flowed to the resistance from government and some private sources. Although the amount of this aid was exaggerated by the Kabul

regime and the Soviet Union, it was important in helping sustain the resistance struggle.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE RESISTANCE

Foreign aid received by the resistance began in 1978 in the form of money. These funds allowed resistance groups outside Afghanistan to survive and to purchase arms for guerrilla forces operating inside the country. Financial aid originated mostly from the Arab countries, with Saudi Arabia, the small Gulf states, and Libya most often cited in news accounts. Iran also was frequently mentioned as a donor in the early years, 1978-79. The amounts of the grants were not disclosed; nor was the degree of involvement of private donors versus governments.

After the Soviet invasion in late 1979, the amount of financial aid from the Arab countries increased. Donations ostensibly were contingent on unification of the Peshawar-based resistance groups; progress in this direction probably was due largely to this pressure. Financial aid allowed the leaders of the more important resistance groups in Peshawar to procure modest offices and living quarters, and to enjoy a regular income. It also enabled some of them to travel to the Middle East, Western Europe, and North America to plead the resistance cause.

As before the Soviet invasion, the amount of financial aid generally was not made public. Among the few public reports was one in early 1980 that Saudi Arabia would provide \$25 million to the resistance, and another by the Gulf News Agency in March 1981 that Saudi Arabia had donated \$15 million to the Afghan resistance. According to resistance sources, private Saudi aid in 1984 came to \$35 million.⁵

On the identity of aid recipients, a Swiss journalist probably was close to the mark when he reported in September 1981 that

Whereas the more moderate (resistance) groups are financed by the Gulf states, the (fundamentalist) Hezb-i-Islami reportedly is supported by Libya, Iran, and the Moslem Brotherhood.⁶

ARMS AID TO THE RESISTANCE

Despite Soviet and Kabul allegations to the contrary, Afghan resistance organizations vehemently denied, during the early years of

the insurgency, 1978-82, receiving aid from foreign governments. They claimed that foreign funding came from individuals. They also said that such arms as the resistance possessed were captured from the Kabul regime and the Soviets. Even after evidence was shown that some outside arms aid was being received, the resistance stoutly held that most of their arms came from the enemy.

Up to 1982, despite near hysterical charges by the Kabul government that "American imperialists, Chinese chauvinists," and others were giving massive amounts of arms to the "gangsters," little evidence of such assistance was visible. In May 1980 a *New York Times* correspondent reported: "a small number of arms with Egyptian and Chinese markings have been seen."⁷

In the summer of 1981 an American correspondent from *The Christian Science Monitor* traveling behind the lines in Afghanistan reported:

Most resistance supplies . . . consist of captured communist material. This correspondent saw no sign of Western assistance and, reportedly, only one-quarter of guerrilla guns are procured in Pakistan.⁸ For many resistance members inside Afghanistan, foreign assistance from the United States, China, or the Gulf countries is regarded as a joke. Even if outside aid is seeping through, they complain they do not see much of it. The Peshawar political groups allow only a trickle to reach fighters inside. The rest is used either to reinforce the resistance under direct control of Peshawar or apparently to line the politicians' own pockets.⁹

A Frenchman who visited Pakistan and Afghanistan at about the same time gave much the same report: "the guerrillas to this day have not received a single weapon, a single peashooter, a single cartridge from the West."¹⁰ In January 1982 a Western newsman repeated the theme: "in virtually every accessible region of the country, *mujahidin* commanders insisted bitterly to *Asiaweek* that external support had been woefully insufficient and often inappropriate to their requirements."¹¹

A CHANGE IN 1982

The flow of foreign arms aid became significant only after the Soviet invasion, and particularly after 1981. Increased deliveries and

growing sophistication of weapons received was commented on by a Dutch newsman in late 1982 as follows:

Rocket-propelled grenade launchers, recoilless rifles, and mortars were much more in evidence than a year ago. The overwhelming bulk of these relatively advanced weapons have come from outside Afghanistan, whereas the majority of rifles have been either captured from the enemy or were brought over by defectors, particularly during the first two years of the war.¹²

An increasingly important source of supply is from across the Pakistan border. The United States, China, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia have cooperated with the Pakistanis to guarantee a steady flow of infantry weapons to the insurgents, according to a variety of sources, including Afghan resistance leaders, senior diplomats and local officials in Pakistan, and West European military specialists. . . .

The increase in the amount and sophistication of weapons at the disposal of the guerrillas has probably been the most important factor in ensuring both the survival of the resistance movement and the escalation of the war over the past three years. . . .

The mujahidin picked up their arms at a small office in Parachinar (Pakistan) set up by the (Afghan resistance) parties as a sort of distribution center. . . .

Supplies of this kind reportedly have doubled or tripled since last year. The center at Parachinar is said to receive a truckload like this one every three or four days, and it is not the only distribution center. . . .

Resistance officials insist that they have purchased all these weapons on the open market or from the local arms industry that flourishes legally in the tribal areas of Pakistan's north-west province. Pakistani authorities have denied Soviet allegations that they were supplying the Mujahidin with arms. But Afghan, Pakistani, and European sources told a different story. Resistance leaders acknowledge privately that they do not have enough money to pay for all the weapons they are receiving. And while it is true that Pakistan is not giving

arms to the mujahidin, it is the major conduit for funneling weapons to them in Afghanistan.

The sources said that a framework was set up to deliver arms from the four donor countries through Pakistan, the common motivation being the fear of Soviet expansionism.¹³

On 10 June 1983, the DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) Defense Minister, General Adbul Qader, admitted to a Polish newsman that the resistance had better and more powerful weapons. He went on to charge: "the weapons are supplied by the United States, China, Egypt, and some other Arab countries, and also Israel."¹⁴

Western correspondents visiting guerrilla forces in Afghanistan confirmed the foreign arms flow by such statements as the following:

The supply line [into Afghanistan] can be seen at the tiny frontier hamlet. . . . There, scores of mujahidin or insurgents crossed the border day after day carrying new Kalashnikovs with markings in Chinese or Arabic, or modified 303 rifles made either in Canada or the United States. (December 1982)¹⁵

On the road, we have outstripped other caravans, loaded with heavy machine guns, disassembled and loaded onto donkeys. . . . All made in China, as the interpreters admitted with some hesitation. (February 1983)¹⁶

[The] Afghans [were] preparing caravans of horses and donkeys for "trips" inside. Piles of supplies—medicines and dextrose from various countries, brand new Chinese-made Kalashnikov assault rifles, heavy machine guns and antitank mines, ammunition for rocket-propelled grenade launchers and various other weapons—lay on the ground ready to be tied onto the pack animals. (August 1983)¹⁷

Beginning about 1982, arms of some sophistication reached the resistance from outside. But most of the weapons used by the resistance still came from DRA and Soviet forces. The DRA army was the main source. Explained a guerrilla commander in Kunduz province, "sometimes they [DRA soldiers] sell ammunition to middlemen, traders who either sell it to us or donate it; more often the troops just give it to us free."¹⁸

An American newsman visiting Paktia province after the battles of Zar Pass in May 1983 reported that vast stores of Soviet-made

weaponry had been captured: 122mm howitzers, two tanks, an armored personnel carrier, and many trucks. It was a story common all over Afghanistan.¹⁹

EGYPTIAN ARMS AID

In February 1980 Egypt's Minister of Defense, Lieutenant General Kamal Hassan Ali, answering a question at a news conference whether Egypt was providing training to guerrilla fighters, responded that Egypt was "training some of them to some extent." When asked if the guerrilla fighters would return with weapons from Egypt, he answered "yes."²⁰

Five months later, in July 1980, two resistance emissaries to Cairo, when asked whether the resistance was receiving weapons from Islamic or Arab nations, stated:

This is no longer a secret. The Afgh'an revolution receives weapons and ammunition from Egypt. . . . All that we receive from [other Islamic and Arab nations] is some financial aid, and sometimes kind words.²¹

In December 1980 President Anwar Sadat said in a television interview that Egypt would send more arms—along with clothing, medicine, and food—to the Moslem rebels fighting Soviet forces.²² How many Afghans received guerrilla training in Egypt was never publicly disclosed. If training were given, it could not have been given to very many. None of the many Western newsmen who subsequently visited guerrilla forces in Afghanistan ever reported meeting an Egyptian-trained fighter.

Few details about Egyptian arms aid ever came to light. In September 1981 *Le Monde* (Paris) reported:

Until now, Egypt is the only country to have furnished a large quantity of war material to the mujahidin. Egypt declares it is prepared to furnish more, provided the rebels unite. . . . The first shipment was loaded at Oman and discharged on the Pasni coast in Pakistan. There it reached Peshawar, hidden in trucks filled with vegetables.²³

When President Sadat was assassinated in October 1981 Egyptian assistance dropped off markedly, and may have halted

altogether. Apparently the new president, Hosni Mubarak, was less enthusiastic about assisting the Afghan resistance.²⁴

AMERICAN AID

Although Kabul Prime Minister Keshtmand alleged that the US Government openly assisted the resistance forces, the US Government never openly admitted such a role. The US Department of State consistently declined to comment on questions about what, if anything, the United States was doing in this regard.²⁵

Such evidence as existed was indirect, coming mostly from members of the Congress or American news media.

THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION In his memoirs, President Jimmy Carter hinted that soon after the Soviet invasion his administration decided to assist the resistance as follows:

If the Soviets could consolidate their hold on Afghanistan, the balance of power in the entire region would be drastically modified in their favor, and they might be tempted toward further aggression. We were resolved to do everything feasible to prevent such a turn of events. . . .

In a highly secret move, we also assessed the possibility of arranging for Soviet-made weapons (which would appear to have come from the Afghan military forces) to be delivered to freedom fighters in Afghanistan and of giving them what encouragement we could to resist subjugation by the Soviet invaders.²⁶

The first seeming evidence of US aid came on 9 January 1980, barely two weeks after the Soviet invasion. Senator Birch Bayh (D-Ind.), Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, said on NBC-TV's "Today" show: "we did take certain steps to help them [the Afghan resistance] do what any group of citizens should be able to do in a country."²⁷

A week later, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* both carried articles claiming that the United States planned to supply some arms to the resistance. *The New York Times* account stated:

The United States began an operation to supply light infantry weapons to Afghan insurgent groups in mid-January. White

*House officials said today. The decision to funnel arms to rebel forces resisting Soviet troops in Afghanistan was made by the Special Coordination Committee of the National Security Council. . . . It was subsequently approved by the President, a senior official of the Council said. . . . The arms sent to Afghan insurgent groups are largely of Soviet design including Kalashnikov AK-47 automatic rifles, according to the official.*²⁸

Apparently, according to the similar *Washington Post* article, some official non-weapons aid previously had been given to the resistance. "US covert aid prior to the December invasion," stated the article, "was limited to funneling small amounts of medical supplies and communications equipment to scattered rebel tribes."²⁹

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION If press accounts are to be believed, President Reagan continued the previous administration's policy. At a press conference on 9 March 1981, three months after taking office, President Reagan stated that if Afghan insurgents asked for weapons aid, he would consider complying with the request. Explained the President:

*These are freedom fighters. These are people fighting for their own country and not wanting to become a satellite state of the Soviet Union.*³⁰

FOUR MONTHS LATER, IN JULY 1981 The most explicit accounts of alleged American aid in Afghanistan appeared first in a television report and then in an article in *The New Republic* by Carl Bernstein. He wrote:

A year and a half after Soviet troops marched into Afghanistan, the US Central Intelligence Agency is coordinating a complex, far-flung program, involving five countries and more than \$100 million, to provide the Afghan resistance with the weaponry of modern guerrilla warfare. . . . The result is an emerging anti-Soviet alliance—the United States, China, Pakistan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia that . . . is effectively countering the most blatant Soviet aggression of the postwar era.

Planning for the operation was personally ordered by President Carter. . . . In the hours after the Soviets crossed the Afghan border, the President told a meeting of the National Security Council that the United States had a "moral obligation" to help arm the resistance.

The United States has provided financial assistance, \$20 million to \$30 million to start, considerably more since; has arranged the purchase of some weapons in the international arms market; and is the operation's primary planner and coordinator. Saudi Arabia has undertaken the other major financing role, equal to or greater than that of the United States. . . . The Egyptians have provided training for the Afghan guerrilla fighters and serve as the major source of arms—supplying weapons obtained from the Soviet Union during the years of Egyptian-Soviet friendship, and tons of replicated Soviet armaments, turned out in factories on the outskirts of Cairo.

The Reagan administration has since reviewed the clandestine operation and ordered it expanded.³¹

By May 1983 a news report indicated that the United States may have increased its arms aid. From Washington, DC, *The New York Times* reported:

The United States has stepped up the quantity and quality of covert military support for Afghan insurgents fighting Soviet forces and the Soviet-backed government in Kabul, according to Administration officials.

. . . President Reagan made the decision last fall [1982] with the purpose of forcing Moscow to pay a higher price for its more than three-year-old effort to assert control over Afghanistan. . . . The arms are brought to Pakistan by ship and aircraft and then trucked to the border areas. . . . A large portion of the arms came from old Egyptian stockpiles of Soviet weapons and that the Saudis and the United States were paying the bills. The total cost of the operation is estimated to have been between \$30 million and \$50 million a year for the last three years, with the United States paying about half.

Told that Soviet officials said in March that the United States had stepped up the arms flow to the insurgents, a senior Administration official responded, "Good, I'm glad they're feeling it." . . .

One political appointee in the Administration said: "I couldn't believe that after all we had said about helping the guerrillas and being tough on the Russians, we weren't really doing much to help. It was outrageous."

*An administration expert said the restraints were largely in deference to Pakistani leaders, who had expressed concern about being too exposed. Pakistani leaders were said to be particularly concerned about doing things that could provoke a Soviet strike against guerrilla staging areas in Pakistan.*³²

MORE NEWS ACCOUNTS In April 1984 David Ignatius reported in *The Wall Street Journal*:

While the US is providing rhetorical support for the anti-Soviet guerrillas—and small secret shipments of weapons—the Reagan administration has deliberately avoided making any large commitment to them. . . . “If we escalate, then the Soviets go after the Pakistanis,” explains one US official . . . “The most we can do is give them incremental increases in aid, and raise the costs to the Soviets.”

A US intelligence source says that covert American aid to the Afghan rebels currently totals about \$80 million annually. The aid level has risen gradually since the Carter administration requested about \$30 million in January 1980. . . . To mask American involvement, the US generally provides only Soviet-type weapons. US policy also precludes any American advisers or trainers inside Afghanistan. “We train the trainers,” says one official.

*The US provides Soviet-designed SAM-7 shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles, which the guerrillas say they need badly. . . . Aid to the Afghan rebel groups also comes from China and Egypt, which also provides Soviet-type weapons, and from Saudi Arabia, which offers about the same value of support that the US does.*³³

In July 1984 *The Washington Post* reported that the Congress had approved more funding for covert assistance to the Afghan resistance. The account stated:

It probably is the largest covert CIA operation, followed by funding of the “contra” rebels fighting the leftist Sandinista government of Nicaragua. . . .

*One intelligence source familiar with the program said that Congress has approved about \$30 million to \$35 million each year.*³⁴

US Government sympathy with the resistance was clear. Ever since the Soviet invasion in December 1979, the US Department of State had issued publications and co-sponsored academic conferences on Afghanistan to keep the American public and the world informed of the Soviet aggression. One of the US Department of State's most useful efforts was to issue two special publications in 1981 and 1982, detailing evidence of Soviet use of chemical warfare.

Cabinet members of the Reagan administration made statements that clearly pointed to sympathy with the resistance: On 3 July 1983 Secretary of State George P. Shultz told a crowd of cheering Afghan refugees in Pakistan at a camp near the Khyber Pass: "fellow fighters for freedom, we are with you."³⁵

Four months later, on 1 October, Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger visited probably the same refugee camp; when asked for arms, he replied: "we will do all that we can."³⁶ However, no official confirmation ever was made of American covert aid, funds allocated, source of arms, or delivery arrangements. Few if any American-made weapons ever have been identified in Afghanistan.

Certainly, within Afghanistan the general complaint among guerrilla fighters was that the United States was doing little or nothing to aid them. Said Adbul Haq, a *Hezb-i-Islami* (Khalis faction) guerrilla commander: "the US has a big mouth but doesn't do much."³⁷

In the United States, many Americans, including a few members of the Congress, wanted the US Government to do more to help the resistance. At a conference on Afghanistan in December 1983 in Washington, DC, Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Affairs Adviser in the Carter administration, told the audience that the Reagan administration should supply Afghan resistance fighters with more sophisticated Western weapons, instead of having to rely on the Soviet-designed arms they now received. He said that the resistance did not need "highly sophisticated, complex" weapons, but their continued reliance on Soviet-made or -designed weapons was causing them "operational and logistical problems."³⁸

ARGUMENTS AGAINST MORE ARMS AID Most academicians and newsmen who closely followed Afghanistan affairs favored aid to the resistance. A very small number opposed aid, usually citing one or more of four reasons for their position. Their arguments and the counter arguments are given below.

1) The most important argument against aid was that arms aid to the Afghans, especially in significant amounts, could lead to an escalation of Soviet military or subversive pressures against Pakistan. This matter was of genuine concern to the Pakistanis. Said one US official: "if we escalate, then the Soviets go after the Pakistanis."³⁹

The rebuttal and position of policymakers in the West usually was that the Pakistani authorities should determine the appropriate level of assistance to the resistance.

2) The second argument had a humanitarian theme. Since additional arms assistance likely would be insufficient to dislodge the Soviet military, the argument went, "to aid the Afghans now is not to offer them a better chance of relief from oppression, but rather to improve their prospects for near extinction."⁴⁰

The answer to this do-nothing argument was that the Afghans themselves should be allowed to decide that question—not well-meaning Westerners.

3) The third argument was that increased American aid would lead to a deterioration in Soviet-American relations and increase world and regional tensions.

The usual rebuttal here was that if the Soviets were interested in improving relations they would not have invaded Afghanistan in the first place.

4) The last common argument was that increasing arms aid to the resistance would jeopardize UN-sponsored diplomatic negotiations for a Soviet withdrawal.

The counter here was that the UN-sponsored talks were going nowhere and that limiting the effectiveness of the resistance only strengthened the bargaining hand of the Soviets.

PAKISTANI ASSISTANCE

No evidence existed that Pakistan provided arms from its official stores for the resistance. But Pakistan did provide important assistance in other ways. Most foreign arms supplies for the insurgents seemingly crossed Pakistan. And the most important exile resistance organizations were based in Peshawar. Without official Pakistani tolerance, activities of the resistance would have been severely handicapped. The Pakistanis nevertheless were sensitive about their role.

They were concerned over the possibility of Soviet retaliation if aid to the resistance reached intolerable levels in Soviet eyes.⁴¹

Consequently, the Pakistanis maintained a tight rein on foreign assistance of most every kind. Newsman Carl Bernstein explained this tight rein as follows:

*The Pakistanis imposed three conditions of their own: first, the countries supplying weapons to Afghanistan would not publicly acknowledge their role; second, arms arriving in Pakistan would have to move immediately across the border, without any storage or warehousing; and third, the quantity of weapons moving through Pakistan would be limited to the equivalent of about two planeloads a week. . . . Under the supervision of the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, the arms are transferred to the mujahidin, who carry them across the border on the backs of men and mules.*⁴²

Financial and material assistance to the many Afghan resistance organizations also may have been controlled and allocated by the Pakistanis. In February 1982 a Swedish correspondent first reported this control.⁴³ In April 1983 a French reporter stated that 11 resistance organizations officially were recognized for purposes of receiving aid distributed by Islamabad.⁴⁴ One Pakistani political organization, the *Jamaat-i-Islam*, often was mentioned as a principal conduit for financial aid to the fundamentalist resistance organizations, particularly to Gulbuddin's *Hezb-i-Islami*. But the extent of this aid was not clear.⁴⁵

IRANIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE RESISTANCE

Iran provided only negligible amounts of arms to the Afghan partisans during the first years of the resistance, 1978-81. While Iran was vociferous in condemning the leftist governments of Taraki, Amin, and Babrak and the Soviet intervention—in fact, no foreign country was more vitriolic in its verbal attacks—it was careful that its deeds did not match its words. The aid it did give during the early years was limited to small amounts of financial aid to exile Afghan resistance groups in Iran and Peshawar. When Afghan guerrilla fighters crossed into Iran for sanctuary, they were required to turn in their weapons. These were returned to them when they re-entered Afghanistan.

In 1982 Iran's policy changed. Some arms and other aid were made available to guerrilla bands in Afghanistan. This aid was conditional on these groups being pro-Khomeini and agreeing to support publicly Iran's foreign policy positions, such as condemning the United States. This conditional-aid policy had mixed success. It was rejected by almost all guerrilla groups, including the Panjshir Valley forces led by Ahmed Shah Massoud.

But one small group, *Al-Nasr*, in the Hazarajat region, accepted it. This acceptance required no major policy shift for *Al-Nasr*, since from its inception in 1980 it had been Shiite and pro-Khomeini. The arms *Al-Nasr* received from Iran enabled it to consolidate its territorial control in certain areas of central Afghanistan at the expense of the larger Hazarajat organization, the *Shura* front. In 1982 Iran became dissatisfied with *Al-Nasr* and shifted its aid to a new pro-Iran group, *Sepah*.

Compared to the arms flow crossing the eastern borders of Afghanistan from Pakistan, the amount coming from Iran was very small.

Besides verbal and arms support for the partisans, Iran accepted large numbers of Afghan refugees. A UN refugee team visiting Iran in 1983 reported that as many as two million Afghans had sought shelter there. (Many of them were former migrant workers.) But this figure was much higher than previously estimated. Most of these refugees were living in far worse economic conditions than those in Pakistan.

CHINESE ASSISTANCE

Little was known about the amount or nature of Chinese assistance to the partisans. The fact that Soviet-designed weapons with Chinese markings frequently were seen with the *mujahidin* suggested a Chinese origin.

The DRA regime, however, had no doubts on this score. It frequently charged the People's Republic of China with aiding the partisans. The DRA stated, for example, that "Beijing also actively took part in the policy of establishing rebel camps and arming them with Chinese weapons."⁴⁶

THE RESISTANCE GOES ON THE AIRWAVES

Efforts to establish a resistance radio began soon after the Soviet intervention. In April 1980 Gulbuddin's *Hezb* organization began operating a small clandestine radio transmitter in Kunar province, adjacent to Pakistan.⁴⁷

It did not, however, broadcast for long. The *Hezb* transmitter reportedly soon was shifted for security reasons to Zabol province, also adjacent to Pakistan; it operated there for only a few months.

THE FRENCH HELP LAUNCH RADIO FREE KABUL A much more ambitious broadcast undertaking began the next year, in 1981. A prominent French writer, Bernard-Henri Levy, and a Russian dissident living in England, Vladimir Bukovsky, cooperated in raising funds to establish Radio Free Kabul (RFK). The Human Rights Committee in Paris took RFK under its wing and opened a tax-deductible account for public contributions; later, a similar account was established in England. With these funds a radio studio was established in Pakistan, portable FM transmitters were purchased and shipped to the resistance in Afghanistan, and Afghan operators were trained to use them.

On 24 August 1981 radio listeners heard for the first time the phrase that would introduce all RFK broadcasts: "this is the voice of Radio Free Kabul." By November 1982, 22 transmitters were located inside Afghanistan. The goal was to establish a network of 36 mobile stations to blanket the entire country. Each transmitter had a range of 25 miles, was of briefcase size, weighed only 16 pounds, and was rechargeable.⁴⁸

A Peshawar-based committee representing five resistance groups from the Unity-of-Three and Unity-of-Seven coalitions ran the broadcast operation. The committee decided the content of the broadcasts, selected the radio operators to be trained, and arranged for them to be attached to guerrilla groups inside the country. Tapes prepared at the central studio for broadcast over the transmitters were sent to the operating teams.

For some months in 1981-82 the transmitters beamed daily 30-minute programs in Afghanistan's two major languages, *Pushtu* and *Dari*. At the same time, 15-minute broadcasts in Russian languages were aimed at Soviet occupation forces.

Afghan and foreign embassy personnel in Kabul regularly reported hearing RFK. French medical personnel in resistance-held areas spoke of "crowds of villagers clustering eagerly round a single set to hear the latest reports of resistance activities."⁴⁹ Predictably, the Kabul regime reacted angrily. On 3 November 1981 DRA Foreign Minister Shah Mohammad Dost told an Agence France-Press correspondent that the RFK programs were "an obstacle to good relations with Paris."⁵⁰

Two months later, Radio Kabul broadcast that RFK was a "Jewish radio station on Pakistani territory," operated by "elements belonging to Western and Israeli espionage organizations." A reward of 10,000 Afghanis (about \$200) was offered to anyone who could provide information leading to the capture of an RFK transmitter.⁵¹ With their direction-finding equipment, Soviet-DRA units were able to find a number of the transmitters. In 1982 one located near Kabul was bombed but sustained only antenna damage. Later, during the May 1982 Soviet-DRA offensive up the Panjshir Valley, two RFK operators were killed and another was captured.

By April 1983, the broadcasting project was in difficulty. Only five of 11 transmitters were working. By autumn of that year the broadcast program was terminated. Logistical and technical problems of supplying and maintaining the sets had proved insuperable. One complaint was that when the tapes were received by the transmitting teams in Afghanistan from the studio in Pakistan, the material already was old. Moreover, only a minority of radios in Afghanistan were equipped with FM, so transmitting over the FM band reached few listeners.

Meanwhile the Russian-language programs had been discontinued for fear they might encourage Soviet soldier defections. The radio's Western sponsors were worried that defectors who reached Pakistan or Iran would be returned to the Soviet Union.⁵²

A SHORT-WAVE STATION STARTS A few months after the demise of Radio Free Kabul, another resistance radio station went on the air. On 25 December 1983, on the fourth anniversary of the Soviet intervention, a 500-watt short-wave station called the Free Radio of the Voice of Afghan *Mujahidin* began transmitting in *Dari* (Persian) and *Pushtu* from the mountains of eastern Afghanistan. The same French sponsoring organization that had helped RFK helped set up the transmitter and broadcast the first program.

Unlike the limited FM range of RFK, the new station could be heard all over the country. Also, unlike the earlier broader political effort, the committee running it was connected solely with the Unity-of-Three coalition. This fact gave promise of fewer internal political disputes. As of the first months of 1984, the new station regularly was heard by listeners in and out of the country.⁵³

A second new resistance broadcasting station also went on the air beginning 15 January 1984. Calling itself the Voice of Islamic Revolution of Afghanistan, it too broadcast in *Dari* and *Pushtu*.⁵⁴ Unlike the Voice of Afghan *Mujahidin*, this second clandestine radio station often was anti-West. One broadcast stated: "the Muslim Afghans know that there is no difference between the British, Americans, Soviets, Israelis, and their puppet regimes and hirelings."⁵⁵ Its base of support was not known, but apparently it was linked to the fundamentalist resistance alliance.

Were the clandestine radio stations worthwhile? The Afghans thought so and were elated. The morale-boosting effect apparently was tremendous. The prevailing feeling seemed to be that expressed by a guerrilla commander in 1981: "the radio you have brought us is worth more than a thousand Kalashnikovs."⁵⁶

MEDICAL AID BY THE FRENCH, SWEDES, AND ICRC

One of the remarkable and most heart-warming aspects of the resistance struggle was the medical aid provided by groups of Western Europeans. This aid came from three principal sources.

- The Swedish Government financed a chain of 10 medical clinics behind the lines; they were staffed with Afghan medical personnel.
- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) operated two hospitals in Peshawar and Quetta, Pakistan, devoted solely to the care of wounded *mujahidin*.
- Three private Paris-based medical organizations provided teams of foreign doctors and nurses and medical supplies to resistance-held areas. Largely composed of French personnel, these Paris-supported medical teams worked deep inside Afghanistan to provide care for the estimated 8 to 10 million Afghans living in the

80 percent of the country held by the resistance.⁵⁷ This private French medical aid attracted the most world attention.

The resistance-held areas had never enjoyed many medical services even in the pre-1978 years. After the insurgency began, and representatives of the leftist Kabul government were expelled, almost no medical services existed until the French- and Swedish-sponsored teams came. According to one source, of the 800 doctors in Afghanistan before the war, only 300 were left by the end of 1983. And of these, few worked with the *mujahidin* in rural areas.⁵⁸

FRENCH MEDICAL PERSONNEL BEHIND THE LINES

Some 27 mostly-French doctors and nurses—of whom a dozen were women—were serving inside Afghanistan in August 1983. They were described as the “unsung heroes of the war.”⁵⁹ Praise for the French medical teams was widespread; it included a recommendation by a Pakistani diplomat that these emissaries of mercy be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.⁶⁰

During the 1980-83 period, approximately 250 French-sponsored doctors and nurses served in resistance-held areas; most did stints of four to eight months before being replaced. Each expatriate medical team consisted of two to four doctors and/or nurses. A number of these medical personnel were repeat visitors; one woman doctor even served six times. Though most of the personnel were French nationals, a sprinkling came from Holland, Norway, Britain, and Belgium.⁶¹

The French medical teams were sponsored by three Paris-based private organizations: *Medecins sans Frontieres* (MSF—Physicians without Borders); *Aide Medicale Internationale* (AIM—International Medical Aid); and *Medecins du Monde* (MDM—Physicians of the World).

The MSF organization was by far the most active in Afghanistan. It had been the first group to send a medical team, in May 1980. That team reported that neither doctors nor medicines were available, that measles and diphtheria were of epidemic proportions, and that many war-wounded persons needed treatment. By the end of 1983 MSF had sent more than 170 doctors and nurses into the interior. It also had equipped and operated at various times 12 small hospitals in three provinces. AIM had sent 40 to 50 persons; and MDM, 20 persons.⁶²

The DRA and the Soviets found the presence of the French medical teams embarrassing. Initially, they tried to destroy the hospitals and capture or kill the teams. In 1981 four small MSF hospitals and one AIM hospital were bombed. In 1982 an AIM hospital marked with a large red cross on the roof was destroyed.⁶³ During the May 1982 offensive up the Panjshir Valley, the Soviets attempted to capture the two French women doctors. Said one of the doctors two months later:

*The Russians were looking for us specifically. They would pass out leaflets in the villages telling the Afghans that we were prostitutes trying to steal emeralds from the Panjshir [mines].*⁶⁴

In this instance, the two French doctors eluded capture. But six months later, in January 1983, in Lowgar province, a French male doctor—one of a team of three—was not so fortunate. Dr. Philippe Augoyard was captured by Soviet forces specifically looking for him. He was subjected to a show trial in Kabul and was sentenced to eight years of imprisonment. He was freed in June 1983 following French public protests and diplomatic efforts. During his incarceration in Kabul, one of his interrogators told him “you are more dangerous to us with a syringe than with a gun.”⁶⁵

Dr. Augoyard's experience did not deter the flow of French personnel. On the night news of his capture reached Pakistan, a team of four French doctors set off for the Afghan interior, and others followed.⁶⁶

After the destruction in 1982 of the red cross-marked hospital, buildings used by French medical teams in resistance-held areas were not marked. In some cases the teams deliberately moved every few days to thwart Soviet efforts to locate them. In other instances, the doctors operated their small hospitals out of caves. As of early 1984, however, the Soviets may have halted their efforts to eradicate the French medical teams. The unfavorable world publicity generated by the capture and trial of Dr. Augoyard probably caused the policy change.⁶⁷

Most of the patients treated by the French medical teams were civilians. The sponsoring Paris groups rejected the Soviet-DRA claim that the doctors were supporting “counterrevolutionaries.” They pointed out that “90 percent of our patients are sick civilians; only 10 percent are wounded freedom fighters.”⁶⁸

Members of the French medical teams served in Afghanistan with little or no remuneration. Their Paris sponsors paid their round-trip air fares to Pakistan. On their arrival, sponsoring resistance groups arranged for their travel into Afghanistan and provided housing, food, and protection while in country. According to one French doctor, the cost to the sponsoring organization was \$7,500 to send a medical team of three persons to Afghanistan for three months.⁶⁹

American correspondent William Branigin found the motives impelling French doctors and nurses to go to Afghanistan "something of a puzzle." He wrote:

*The motives seem to combine a desire to gain broader medical experience, a quest for adventure, a melange of humanitarian and political considerations, and, perhaps, some of the personal escapism that sometimes prompts men to join the Foreign Legion.*⁷⁰

John Train, Executive Vice President of the New York-based Afghanistan Relief Committee, explained the medical teams' motives as follows:

*Almost all the worthwhile humanitarian aid going into Afghanistan is taken in by French teams. Wondering why it is so, I have realized that France is almost the only country where having been a resister, or maquisard, in World War II is today a matter of great prestige; so the French think naturally in those terms. Also, they believe in principles, and Afghanistan must be the clearest issue of conscience since Hitler's murder of the Jews.*⁷¹

Although a handful of nationals of other countries served with the French medical teams, their numbers hardly amounted to 2 percent. A French doctor in the Panjshir Valley explained that perhaps the French found the unsanitary and primitive conditions, and the prospect of crossing a border illegally, less troubling than did other nationalities. He added that "a Swiss or German might find it hard to accept these things."⁷² According to the leader of the largest French organization, no American would be accepted for fear of the CIA label.⁷³

Whatever the motives that induced the French medical teams to serve in a dangerous and difficult environment, their aid was most

welcome to the Afghans living in the eight provinces where they worked.

SWEDISH GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIZES CLINICS IN AFGHANISTAN'S INTERIOR

In December 1982 the office of Swedish International Development Aid (SIDA) allocated disaster aid funds to the private Swedish Afghanistan Committee to establish medical clinics in the Afghan interior. By the end of 1983, more than 4 million Kroner (\$500,000) had been spent or obligated. Nine or 10 such clinics were set up in six provinces; they were operated by SIDA-paid Afghan doctors recruited from outside Afghanistan. By mid-1984, 17 clinics reportedly were operating. The sponsoring Swedish committee supported not only the doctors and their staffs but stocked the clinics with medical supplies. In return, the local *mujahidin* organization controlling the area guaranteed the clinic staff's safety.⁷⁴

Like the French teams, the Swedish clinics were enthusiastically welcomed. A Swedish journalist who visited a clinic in Kunar province reported that it had treated 4,000 patients in three months. Of these patients, only 40 had been injured *mujahidin* fighters.⁷⁵

The Swedish clinics suffered from one major handicap—they were exclusively manned by male medical personnel. Afghan cultural mores made it unthinkable for male doctors to examine female patients, in most circumstances. Hence, local populations where clinics were located also asked for female medical personnel.⁷⁶

IN 1983 AND 1984, AFGHANISTAN SOMETIMES WAS described in the United States as the "forgotten war." Compared to the attention given Central America in the American press, Afghanistan ranked very much lower. Yet most Westerners in North America and Western Europe were genuinely concerned over the Soviet intervention in the central Asian mountain country. In the halls of government in Washington, DC, and in Western Europe, political and military analysts followed events in Afghanistan closely. A keen interest existed to help the resistance in academic circles and volunteer humanitarian agencies.

That interest probably was highest in France. The French seemed to adopt Afghanistan as their "foster child." More French

newsmen prowled about resistance-held areas in Afghanistan, and more French humanitarian organizations operated in the country, than did nationals from the rest of the world combined.

Aid to the resistance was by no means limited to humanitarian assistance inside Afghanistan. In Pakistan, a host of relief agencies, largely bankrolled by the US Government, provided massive amounts of food and material aid to the approximately 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The International Red Cross operated two hospitals devoted to tending wounded *mujahidin* soldiers brought across the border.

Also, some foreign arms and financial aid went to Afghan resistance organizations. Details of this aid were shrouded in official secrecy. But newsmen visiting Pakistan and Afghanistan pointed to an assortment of Arab states as providing financial aid; they also wrote of four countries—China, Egypt, the United States, and Saudi Arabia—as having provided or financed arms aid. For the Soviet-backed Kabul regime, this aid represented an “undeclared war.” The DRA and Soviet press ranted against the “American imperialists, the Chinese hegemonists, and reactionary Moslem regimes.”

This foreign aid was very helpful and most Afghans wanted it increased. Yet most of the arms used by the guerrillas still were captured from DRA and Soviet forces; and most of the guerrillas lived off the land.

Refugees

Due to a misleading and false propaganda campaign waged by the enemies of the Afghan revolution, a number of Afghans still remain abroad, while it is the earnest desire of the Afghan Government to see all these Afghans return to their country.

DRA statement, 19 March 1980

AFGHANS STARTED TO FLEE THEIR COUNTRY IMMEDIATELY after the April 1978 leftist coup. During the first three months, the numbers fleeing came to no more than several hundred; these first refugees consisted mainly of relatives and others associated with the deposed royal family and the Daoud regime. Then, starting in the summer of 1978, as the Taraki and Amin regimes began to arrest and execute thousands of suspected opponents, the trickle swelled to a stream. After the Soviet invasion in December 1979 the stream turned into a flood.

Leaving Afghanistan was relatively easy and remained so into 1985. The borders with Pakistan (1,510 miles long) and Iran (550 miles) were open. Except at a few passes and road entrances, no Afghan government guards were posted to stop refugees. Unlike the border with the USSR, no fence or other barrier demarcated the long Pakistani and Iranian borders. For Kabul residents, the usual escape procedure was to contact a refugee-smuggling organization that, for a fee, took suitably disguised people to Peshawar or Quetta. Many Kabul refugees who availed themselves of this procedure feared that their escorts might rob, violate, or even kill them. But no such instances ever were publicized, if they occurred. Typically, refugees hiked overland—over one of some 90 mountain passes—into Pakistan. A very few managed to leave by bus or by plane, usually under false pretenses.

NUMBER OF REFUGEES

The exodus begun in 1978 has never stopped. At the end of 1984 refugees were still escaping, though the flow was down from the record numbers of 1980-81. "Whenever there is heavy fighting, more come in," said a foreign aid official working in Pakistan.¹ The peak month was February 1981, when almost 180,000 persons crossed into Pakistan.²

By the end of 1981, the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) pointed out that Afghanistan's refugees represented the largest group of refugees in the world. At least one out of every three refugees in the world was an Afghan.³ An annual estimate of the number of Afghan refugees is shown at table 5; an estimate of Afghan refugees by destination for 1984 is shown at table 6.

Table 5**Annual estimate of the number of Afghan refugees⁴**

End of Period	To Pakistan	To Iran	Non-returning migrants in Iran	To elsewhere
1978	18,000	?	850,000	?
1979	389,000	?	850,000	?
1980	1,232,000	250,000	850,000	?
1981	2,500,000	?	850,000	?
1982	2,700,000	500,000	850,000	?
1983	2,900,000	650,000	850,000	?
1984	3,200,000	950,000	850,000	70,000

Table 6**Estimate of Afghan refugees by destination for 1984⁵**

Pakistan	3,200,000
Iran	1,800,000
India	40,000
Western Europe	15,000
United States & Canada	10,000
Rest of the world	5,000
Grand Total	5,070,000

The exact number of refugees was in dispute. "There is no one in the country [Pakistan] who knows the exact number," said a UN relief official. This official and some diplomats believed that at the end of 1983 between 1.5 million and 2 million refugees were in Pakistan, fewer than official Pakistani statistics. They also estimated that perhaps another million, including non-returning migrant workers, were in Iran.⁶

The Iranian figure particularly was in doubt, since the Iranian government did not register the refugees and the UNHCR was not allowed to operate programs in that country. Since an estimated 850,000 Afghans had been working as migrant workers in Iran before 1978, most of whom chose not to return after the coup, they usually were considered to be refugees. If they were included, the total refugee figure for Iran could be said to be about 1.5 million at the end of 1983. In May 1984 the UNHCR estimated the total in Iran at 1.8 million.⁷

Altogether, if one accepts the 1984 figures of 3.2 million refugees for Pakistan, 1.8 million persons for Iran, and 70,000 elsewhere, the total comes to 5.1 million persons. This represents about 33 percent of Afghanistan's 1978 population of probably 15.5 million. If one adds to this total those people killed in the fighting (perhaps 300,000) and those persons who fled the countryside to Kabul and other Afghan cities for security (perhaps 1 million), one arrives at the astonishing figure of 41 percent of the population being displaced or killed. Even if this percentage estimate is on the high side—no verification is possible—few countries in the twentieth century have suffered such large-scale population loss and disruption.

ATTITUDE OF THE KABUL GOVERNMENT AND THE SOVIETS

The Kabul government's policy toward the refugees had two features. One feature was to cast doubt on the numbers cited. Said Foreign Minister Shah Mohammad Dost to an Italian interviewer in late 1983:

We do not know their exact number, but 700,000 seems to us a reliable assessment. There is no foundation for the figures usually cited, according to which there are over 3 million refugees in Pakistan and about a million in Iran.⁸

As part of the DRA's numbers-disparaging line, the Kabul regime alleged that Pakistan inflated the figures by including the million-or-more nomads that traditionally passed back and forth across the Pakistan border. The DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) also charged that Pakistan prevented many refugees from returning to Afghanistan, so that it could collect UN relief funds.⁹

The other feature was an appeal by the Babrak government to the refugees to return to their homeland, promising amnesty and benefits. Land would be returned or given to those who returned, consistent with terms of the agrarian reform law; employment also would be provided.¹⁰ A small number of alleged refugees did return and were featured prominently in the Kabul media. But the numbers were negligible compared to the total who had fled.¹¹

ETHNIC BACKGROUND AND AREA OF ORIGIN OF REFUGEES

The overwhelming majority of Afghan refugees in Pakistan were *Pushtu*-speaking peoples. They came mostly from the seven border provinces stretching from Kunar province in the northeast to Kandahar province in the southwest. Western correspondents traveling through those provinces with partisan groups after 1981 often commented on how empty the bomb-damaged villages were and how untended were the once-cultivated fields. Refugees in Iran mostly came from the three *Dari*-speaking (Persian) provinces bordering Iran, particularly from Herat.

The fact that refugees in Pakistan came mostly from areas adjacent to that country was easily explainable. Even before the war considerable travel occurred back and forth across the frontier. Additional attracting factors were common language—*Pushtu*—and tribal ties. Afghans from the *Dari*-speaking (Persian) northern half of Afghanistan not only faced the uncertainties of distance but the difficulties of being understood if they managed to reach Pakistan. Hence, relatively few refugees to Pakistan originated from the central and northern regions of the country.

INTERNATIONAL RELIEF CARE IN PAKISTAN AND IRAN

During the Taraki-Amin era, when the refugee flow to Pakistan was less than half a million, the Pakistan government managed to

cope with the flow on its own. After the December 1979 Soviet invasion, when the refugee stream turned into a river, the Pakistanis avidly welcomed international help. By the end of 1983, a plethora of government and private relief organizations existed. Aid to the refugees by 1983 reached a total between \$700 million and \$900 million.¹²

The most prominent international relief group was the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), which collected and channeled foreign government funds for relief purposes. The UNHCR oversaw health programs, water projects, veterinary care, and procurement and distribution of relief commodities, such as tents, clothing, stoves, and blankets. The Pakistan Refugee Administration was the UNHCR's operational partner in these programs.

Two other prominently involved international organizations were the following: the World Food Program, which channeled wheat, vegetable oil, and dried milk to the refugee camps; and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which operated two surgical hospitals for wounded resistance fighters in Peshawar and Quetta. All told, seven hospitals in Peshawar sponsored by various organizations catered to refugees and wounded *mujahidin*.¹³

In addition to the above three organizations, some 28 other governmental and private volunteer agencies had programs of one sort or another in Pakistan. Prominent among them were the International Rescue Committee, Catholic Relief Service, and Church World Service.

The US Government was a major donor to the Afghan relief program. It provided one-third of the UNHCR's special budget for Afghanistan and one-half of the commodities in the World Food Program's activities. By the end of 1984, the United States had contributed more than \$350 million to Afghan refugee relief.¹⁴ Other governments making contributions to Afghan relief were Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and Saudi Arabia.¹⁵ By contrast, the Soviet Union refused to make a contribution to the UNHCR's special budget for Afghanistan. And the USSR was two years in arrears in its annual dues to the regular administrative budget of the Geneva-based UN organization.¹⁶ In other words, the Soviet Union was making the rest of the world pay for much of the human costs of its war in Afghanistan.

PAKISTAN The country bearing the greatest relief burden was Pakistan. The Pakistan government bore an estimated 45 percent of the total cost of the refugees in its country; this cost ran from \$1 million to \$1.5 million per day. Pakistan bore indirect costs as well: social tensions, environmental damage from excessive use of water and firewood, and overgrazing from an estimated three million animals (mostly sheep and goats).¹⁷

One scholar, however, suspects that on balance Pakistan benefited from the refugees, since international assistance led to considerable road and irrigation improvement and some reforestation.¹⁸ Some scholars also believe that without the Soviet invasion, Pakistan would not have received a \$3.2 billion aid package from the United States.

IRAN In contrast to the large effort in Pakistan, Iran did little for its Afghan refugees. They were not handled in any systematic way, and no international relief efforts were allowed.¹⁹ The Iranian Minister of Labor and Social Welfare, nevertheless, claimed that Iran "had given a warm and brotherly welcome to the Afghan refugees and provided many with jobs."²⁰

Other accounts stated that most refugees had to fend for themselves and many lived in dire poverty. In January 1984 an Afghan visiting London from Iran told a press conference that only 15,000 out of one million Afghan refugees were receiving Iranian government aid.²¹ In late 1983 the Iranians expelled several thousand Afghans to Pakistan for undisclosed reasons.

LOCATION AND CARE OF REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN By the end of 1983, 282 "refugee tented villages" were located in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province, and another 60 such "villages" were in Baluchistan.²² About 70 percent of the refugees lived in traditional box-like mud huts; the remainder occupied tents. Each village averaged 7,000 inhabitants.²³

All refugees who were registered, whether or not they lived in the camps, were entitled to certain benefits; these benefits included a money allowance, food, and medical services. In addition, the Pakistan government placed few restrictions on the refugees. They were allowed to travel freely, hold jobs, and establish businesses. Though they were not allowed to own land or obtain some licenses, such as truck permits, many Afghans found ways to get around these restrictions.²⁴

SOME LOCAL TENSIONS

The large influx of Afghan refugees precipitated no violence from the local Pakistani population. But much grumbling was heard, particularly in Peshawar.²⁵ "The refugees are beginning to create problems for the Pakistani society," a foreign newsman was told.²⁶

Pakistanis complained that the Afghans were better treated by the government and by international agencies than were the local inhabitants. They also charged that the refugees caused tight housing, skyrocketing rents, and depressed wage rates. "They work cheaper than we can do, and they take our jobs away," said one Pakistani.²⁷ The refugees often were blamed for inflation. In some areas of North West Frontier Province, the number of refugees equalled the local population. Peshawar was said to be the largest Afghan city outside Kabul.

RESISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS IN REFUGEE CAMPS The Pakistan government gave indirect assistance to the Afghan resistance through its refugee program. If a registered refugee chose to go back to Afghanistan to fight, he could accumulate benefits in his absence. He could do this by signing a specific *jihad* book and designating a local representative to act for him. In the formality of registering, each refugee was required to join one of the Pakistan government-recognized resistance organizations headquartered in Peshawar.²⁸

One of the most fundamentalist of these groups—*Hezb-i-Islami*, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar—allegedly was long favored by the first Pakistan Refugee Commissioner, Abdullah Khan. "There is little doubt that the best international refugee relief aid finds its way to camps dominated by Hekmatyar's followers," a British correspondent reported.²⁹ This favoritism ended when another Pakistani, Rustam Shah Mohman, replaced Abdullah Khan in the summer of 1983.

One way the Peshawar resistance organizations influenced the refugees was through their schools in the camps. At Nasir Bagh camp, outside Peshawar, the UNHCR ran 12 schools, and a resistance group ran two others.³⁰ In other camps, reportedly half the schools were run by resistance groups.³¹ The curriculum in the resistance-run schools contained fighting instruction and anti-Soviet and anti-Babrak regime teaching.

WOMEN REFUGEES HAVE THE MOST TROUBLE ADJUSTING Few if any of the Afghan refugees died from starvation or

from epidemics. Women, however, particularly suffered from ailments attributed to anxieties and frustrations. Some 75 percent of refugees in the camps were women and children under 15. The rest of the residents were older men, and a few young men to serve as protectors.³²

Medical clinics in the camps reported that 30 to 60 percent of their patients were not physically ill. They suffered, instead, from psychosomatic ailments related to tension, worries over the future, and boredom.³³ All the adult women in the camps were in *purdah** (seclusion), and few had opportunities for gainful employment.

Young girls of school age had little prospect for an education or independent livelihood, largely because of traditional Afghan reluctance to allow women an education. Of the 218 schools in the refugee camps in 1982, none was co-educational; and only 14 schools were for girls.³⁴

In 1983 only 5,000 Afghan girls were in school, a mere 2 percent of school-aged girls. If a girl did attend school she rarely stayed long. In 1983 only five Afghan girls were studying in the fifth grade, all the others having dropped out.³⁵ For many girls, puberty signaled the end of schooling.

Concern over the mental health and employment prospects of the women and girls living in the camps led to some international efforts to help remedy the problem. A World Bank loan project and an International Labor Organization training project have been started; and they may help.



ANY OBSERVERS AND AFGHANS WONDER IF MANY of the refugees ever will see their homeland again. As the tents in the refugee camps are replaced by semi-permanent mud-walled houses, many Pakistanis suspect that the newcomers are there to stay. Certainly, many of them do intend to stay. A British correspondent for Reuters visiting the refugees was told by one 32-year-old former science teacher who now did odd jobs:

*In Persian, *purdah*, literally "veil," or "screen." The practice of secluding women from public observation. The custom requires clothing that covers the entire body and veiling for the head and face, as well as concealing curtains and rugs in the home.

"I'm not going back. There's no future for me in Kabul anymore. . . . I wouldn't go back even if the war ended and the Russians promised to leave."³⁶

Pakistani officials worry, in private, that the great influx of Afghan refugees will create future political problems for the now Punjabi-dominated Pakistan government and bureaucracy.


Many, too, see the large numbers of refugees as a long-term problem for any Soviet-dominated government in Kabul. As long as the Afghan-Pakistan border cannot be sealed, some Afghans always will want to return to their homeland to vent their hostility on the Kabul regime. If the example of Palestinian refugees is germane, future generations of Afghan refugees—particularly those who attend the resistance-run schools—are certain to carry on their vendetta against the Soviets.

Meanwhile, Afghan refugees continue to flee their country. In late 1984 refugee officials in Pakistan reported that from 300 to 500 people crossed the border daily—mostly old men, women, and children.³⁷

Decline and Redirection of the Afghan Economy

Spectacular transformations have taken place in the socio-economic life of our people. In the absence of the destructive activities of the counter-revolution . . . more victories would be achieved.

*Afghanistan bank official
5 January 1983*

PECTACULAR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS INDEED did take place in Afghanistan. But not in the sense the bank official cited above sought to portray. A more accurate description of economic development was provided by Afghan Prime Minister Sultan Ali Keshtmand in a remarkable statement to an April 1983 financial seminar in Kabul:

The country's financial situation is . . . seriously affected by political and economic problems which have resulted from the imperialists' undeclared war on the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and from the internal reactionary plots.

. . . The counterrevolutionary bands sent from abroad have destroyed 50 percent of the country's schools, more than 50 percent of our hospitals, 14 percent of the state's transportation vehicles, 75 percent of all communication lines, and a number of hydroelectric and thermal electric stations. About 24 billion Afghanis (\$432 million) damage has been done to the country. This is one half of the total amount set for developing the country's economy during the 20 years before the April (1978) Revolution. The country's financial situation currently is difficult.¹

Following the Soviet invasion in late December 1979, Afghanistan experienced wrenching economic disruption and destruction. Without massive Soviet economic assistance, the Kabul regime would have collapsed under the weight of severe budget shortfalls and shortages of food and clothing.

Those persons living in Soviet-controlled cities such as Kabul often could obtain rationed food and other commodities at subsidized prices.² But those persons in the resistance-controlled countryside often suffered from food shortages and malnutrition. Western correspondents who traveled in the interior with guerrilla groups commented on the large number of villages—probably half of the country's total—that had been devastated by Soviet bombing.³

Reliable statistics illustrating economic changes during the five years from 1980 to 1984 are sparse. Official Afghan government figures usually did not reflect reality. Specific data on recent-year performance is scanty; sometimes, in the case of monetary and fiscal data, the data available is hard to correlate. Although the government generally was reluctant to reveal the true state of affairs, an occasional statement did point to the state of Afghanistan's acute dependence on the Soviet Union. For example, in 1981 Prime Minister Sultan Ali Keshmand said "we obtain all vital material and means for the defense of the revolution—that is, food, arms, equipment, oil, and other material goods—from the USSR."⁴

Even international agencies to which Afghanistan belonged had difficulty obtaining timely official statistics. For more than four years, from November 1978 to February 1983, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was unable to send a team to Kabul for the obligatory Article IV consultations. Statistical data for Afghanistan in the IMF's monthly publication, *International Financial Statistics*, was limited and in many categories at least two years in arrears.

Nevertheless, some data was available. A cadre of academic scholars, newsmen, and Western government and international agency officials tried to follow economic developments in the country. The discussion in this chapter is a distillation of what was publicly available.

OVERALL STATE OF THE AFGHAN ECONOMY

The country that Soviet troops overran in late December 1979 was one of the poorest in the world. With an annual per capita income of about \$130, Afghanistan ranked in the lowest category of less-developed countries. Life expectancy was only 40 years, and less than 10 percent of the population was literate. Agriculture provided a living for at least 75 percent of the population; yet these farmers and herdsmen had to eke out an existence from the 6 percent of the arid, mountainous countryside that was cultivable and the 40 percent that was meadowland. The resistance drew most of its recruits from this hardy, tough country stock.

Although agriculture dominated the economy, Afghanistan possessed some impressive mineral deposits, especially natural gas, copper, and iron ore. Much of it, however, had not been exploited because of formidable transportation costs. As for industry, the number of cement, textile, sugar, and fertilizer plants in the entire country could be counted on two hands.

The country had enjoyed modest economic development since World War II, despite its general poverty. Reflecting an expansion of settled agriculture and the growth of urban centers, the proportion of nomads who tended herds of sheep and goats had declined from one-third of the population to 15 percent. Construction of all-weather roads, airports, irrigation canals, and electric power stations had markedly improved the country's infrastructure. No rail system existed, but thousands of buses and trucks transported people and goods around the country. One state airline served the country "internally," linking major Afghan cities; another state airline, Ariana Afghan Airlines, provided "external" air service, linking Afghanistan with foreign cities. During the three years before the 1978 leftist coup, the economy had grown in real terms by perhaps 1 percent a year. This growth might have been well below UN world development targets, but the direction was right.

After the 1978 coup, the Afghan economy stagnated. And then, after the Soviet invasion, the country's economy took a nose dive. Contributing to the economic plunge were the following:

- The insurgency.

- The destruction of villages and neglect of roads.
- The exodus of more than 4 million refugees, who took with them 3 million animals.
- The cessation of Western and international economic aid.⁵

In a few areas, reasonably good weather left subsistence farmers not much worse off than they were before the Soviet invasion. But in areas of heavy fighting, including many of Afghanistan's most fertile valleys, crops were destroyed or lost through lack of irrigation and labor. Because of the decline in agricultural production and the breakdown in the distribution system, the Soviet Union was compelled to supply food and other essential commodities, like textiles, to meet the basic needs of cities, especially Kabul. The capital's food problem was greatly increased by the large number of refugees who had fled from smaller towns and villages ravaged by the Soviets. Kabul's population almost tripled, to an estimated 1.8 million. Although the authorities instituted price controls and rationing, many goods were in short supply and prices climbed. Frequent power blackouts, curfew laws, and indiscriminate impressment of men into the armed forces made life difficult for much of the urban population.⁶

After five years of occupation, the typical economic situation was that depicted of the Soviet Union-bordering northern provinces, as described by Nasrullah Patwal, a resistance commander from Mazar-i-Sharif. He reported the following:

In the northern provinces, the people are only cultivating wheat and barley in order to meet their immediate needs. Even this activity has stopped in the areas surrounding the cities. . . . Sugar beets, cotton, oil-yielding seeds and plants, formerly sold to government factories, are no longer produced. Also, chemical fertilizer . . . cannot be obtained.

For lack of raw materials, the textile mills at Pul-e-Khumry and Balkh have come to a standstill. Factories in Mazar which employed 8,000 workers now are reduced to 800, mostly administrative staff. . . . The Spinjar vegetable oil plant, established in Kunduz in 1953 . . . is hardly reaching 5 percent of its former production. The sugar mill at Baghlan is in the same situation.⁷

LITTLE MARXIST RESTRUCTURING OF THE ECONOMY

Before the 1978 leftist coup, Afghanistan had a mixed private and public sector economy, with the public sector expanding faster. The public sector controlled all banking, mining, large industries (such as cement plants and textile mills), electric power stations, and the two airlines. Some of these businesses always had been in the public sector; others originally were private ventures, but had been nationalized.

Private enterprise dominated in agriculture, retailing, the service sector, such as small hotels (large hotels were mostly state owned), small industries, such as soda water bottling, intercity busing, and a good part of international trade. Market forces generally dictated prices in both the public and private sector.

When the leftists took power in 1978 no large private enterprises were left to be nationalized.⁸ So the leftists turned to small and medium businesses; they seized many hotels, food-processing firms, and handicraft enterprises. More significant than nationalization were the controls imposed on profit margins and international trading, and especially the introduction of agricultural land reform. Profit margins were limited to the 5 to 8 percent range. All private sector imports had to be handled through a government agency; and agricultural land holdings were limited in size. None of these measures proved workable. They hindered production and trade, so that what ensued was a general economic downturn. Double-digit inflation prevailed in 1978 and 1979.

After the Soviet invasion, the Babrak government—declaring that its immediate predecessors had gone too far—removed some economic controls and returned some small businesses to their owners. The right of individuals to own land specifically was recognized and some land that had been confiscated by the Taraki-Amin governments was returned.⁹ In an appeal to farmers to grow more crops, Babrak promised:

Toiling farmers and landowners, the state of the DRA legally recognizes your right to own land . . . the right to transfer the land to heirs and partners, and the purchase and sale of land.¹⁰

Although the concept of private land ownership thus was recognized, the number of state farms was to be expanded from two to between 20 and 25.¹¹

LAND REFORM The most important—politically and economically—of all the reforms introduced by the Taraki-Amin governments had been agricultural land reform. By this reform, they reduced holdings to one to five hectares (2.75 to 13.75 acres) per farm family, depending on land quality. After the Soviet intervention, the Babrak government declared that the land reform program still was basic policy.¹²

Its essentials would not be altered, but implementation would be slowed. In any event, the already widespread and growing insurgency made most land redistribution academic. By early 1983 the DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) claimed that about one quarter of all cultivable land had been redistributed to about 300,000 farm families.¹³ Verification of this claim was impossible, because most farmland was under resistance control. Perhaps the principal innovation introduced by the Babrak government was to grant irrigation-water rights to some owners of redistributed land.¹⁴

In redistributing agricultural land, the Kabul government favored its political supporters. Article 10 of an August 1981 land reform supplement decree declared:

*Landless peasants and those with small plots of lands, whose sons are **voluntarily** [author's emphasis] serving in the armed forces and in units of the Ministry of Interior [including probably the secret police KHAD] are given priority on the distribution of land, based on the approval of the relevant ministries [including again probably clearance by the secret police].¹⁵*

Accepting redistributed land was not without its risks. One peasant who was given a parcel of land had his nose cut off by the mujahidin.¹⁶

Before the 1978 coup more than 40 percent of cultivable land had been in the hands of landowners who made up only 2 percent of all farmers. Some 40 percent of farm families owned less than half a hectare (1.4 acres), and about 80 percent less than four hectares (11 acres). Unquestionably, inequity in landowning existed. Yet the issue of reform was complicated by other factors. A workable land reform program had to address the fact that landowners also provided most

of the farm credit and handled much of the marketing of output. When the leftists, in one stroke, wiped out most of the holdings of the large landowners, they provided no workable substitute for seed financing or marketing of produce. So instead of winning the support of landless peasants, the Taraki-Amin regimes caused agrarian chaos and misery.¹⁷

The Marxists had expected that their land reform program would gain widespread rural support. However, just the opposite occurred. Much of the armed rural rebellion that broke out in 1978 was related to land reform. The peasantry provided the resistance with its most enthusiastic support. Despite this history, the Babrak regime persisted in making land reform one of its major economic programs, whether or not it could be implemented.

Early economic actions of the Babrak government, such as repeal of some controls and nationalizations, and revisions of the land reform program, obviously had been adopted to win public support. Although these measures were welcomed, any political credit so gained soon was dissipated by other factors, notably by the visible Soviet occupation.

LOSS OF TRAINED AND EDUCATED PERSONNEL

A major economic cost of the political upheaval was the decimation of trained and educated personnel. In a country with a 90 percent illiteracy rate, this loss had enormous consequences. During the Taraki-Amin period an estimated 17,000 Afghans were executed and 400,000 fled to Pakistan, out of a total population of 15.5 million. Among those Afghans executed and the refugees were a substantial number of the small educated class. The Taraki-Amin governments had been particularly ruthless in dismissing, demoting, or executing almost all those who had received training in Western Europe or North America. This purge was carried out despite the fact that several of the Marxist leaders, including Hafizullah Amin, had studied in the United States.

After the Soviet invasion, the practice of imprisoning and executing potential opponents declined somewhat, but the civil war increased. Major cities like Kandahar and Herat were badly damaged in the fighting and hundreds of villages were devastated. The refugee flow, which had reached 400,000 before the Soviet invasion, soon turned into a flood. By the end of 1983 some 4 million people

(almost a quarter of the population) had fled the country. Among these refugees was a majority of educated and skilled Afghans.

The experience of one state enterprise, Ariana Afghan Airlines, illustrates the exodus. In September 1980 the chief pilot for Ariana, Habibullah Balkhi, took asylum in Frankfurt. He told the press that some 250 Ariana pilots, engineers, and other personnel had fled the country since the 1978 Marxist coup. Of 27 pilots with the airline, he said, only seven had not defected to the West.¹⁸

The economic cost of this loss of trained personnel was enormous. Many enterprises virtually came to a stop, government administration barely functioned, and services like medical care became scarce. To fill the void, the Babrak regime increased the number of Soviet and East European advisers to between 5,000 and 8,000 by 1984.¹⁹

In many cases these advisers took over administration of the government and state enterprises. This development caused even more resentment among Afghans offended by the prospect of their country becoming a Soviet colony. Had not these advisers stepped in, however, the economic slide probably would have been worse. Looking to the future, the Babrak regime counted on a new generation of Marxist-indoctrinated administrators, many of whom would be educated in the Soviet Union (8,700 were there in 1981,²⁰ of whom 2,000 returned annually to Afghanistan²¹).

ECONOMIC PLANNING AND PRIORITIES

The concept of government economic planning in Afghanistan was not introduced by the Marxists; it had been introduced in the mid-1950s. By April 1978, three Five-Year Plans had been established, a fourth had been drafted but not implemented, and a Seven-Year Plan had just started. The Taraki government, however, promptly set aside the Seven-Year Plan. And before the subsequent Amin government could issue an intended Five-Year Plan, the Soviet invasion intervened.²²

The Babrak government did not at first announce any multi-year plan. Instead, it decided to issue annual Socio-Economic Development Plans until security conditions allowed the preparation of a Five-Year Plan. These annual plans set forth goals, quotas, and targets to be reached; for example, they projected wheat output and the number of illiterates to be trained. The Fiscal Year (FY) 1983-84

plan accorded first priority to "strengthening the public sector" of the economy. Other priorities were to expand socio-cultural services, such as eradicating illiteracy, achieving a 6.6 percent increase in gross national product, and strengthening the armed forces.²³

Reviewing implementation of the first six months of the FY 1983-84 plan, the government said:

*The majority of institutions responsible for implementing the plan targets have gained successes. . . . However, in some spheres . . . the objectives of the plan could not fully be materialized.*²⁴

These failures were blamed on a "continuation of the undeclared imperialist war," shortages of experienced technical personnel and raw materials, and a frequent "lack of attention."²⁵

An early 1980 statement by Sultan Ali Keshtmand, then Deputy Prime Minister and Planning Minister, stated that economic development for the moment would follow a "noncapitalist and anti-imperialist path." When translated from Marxist jargon, this statement meant that the state would proceed slowly in nationalizing and controlling the economy. Planning for the present, he said, would be limited to the public sector and only general guidelines would apply to the private sector.²⁶

To develop the country economically, the Babrak regime expected industrialization to play a large role. For the interim, the regime planned to boost two agricultural crops that were basic to economic development—wheat, to meet food needs; and cotton, mainly for export.²⁷

Few of these hopes were realized. Almost no new industrial plants were built and many existing plants ceased to function because of the insurgency. As for agriculture, wheat production seemingly dropped, while cotton output dove by about 50 percent. Economic goals of the government were far from being realized.

NATIONAL PRODUCTION GOES AWRY

Despite occasional candid admissions that serious economic problems existed, the Babrak government generally maintained the propaganda line that Afghanistan's gross national product was rising. The growth rate, it claimed, rose an average of 2 percent annually from FY 1981 to FY 1983.²⁸

Prime Minister Keshtmand told an interviewer in January 1984 that the country's gross national product was 2.6 percent below pre-1978 levels.²⁹ Then two months later he boasted that in 1983 it had leaped 6 percent.³⁰ To bolster its claims, the government provided statistics like those shown in table 7.³¹

Table 7
Selective indicators of Afghan production

Commodity	FY 1979-80	FY 1982-83
Food grains (million tons)	4.4	4.5
Raw cotton (tons)	132,000	55,000
Cotton textiles (million square meters)	77	24
Natural gas (million cubic meters)	2.3	2.5
Cement (tons)	99,000	101,300
Electricity (million kilowatts)	907	969

If the figures in table 7 are to be believed, the three years FY 1980-83 saw increases in four of six key indicators. Only cotton and cotton textile production show setbacks. While few outside economists questioned the Kabul government's admission of a drop in cotton and textile output, observers doubted the government's claimed increases in most other categories. A sector-by-sector analysis just did not substantiate the government's claim. Overall, the Afghan economy appeared to have declined during the Soviet occupation through 1984.

This overall decline actually began before the Soviet intervention. In 1976 and 1977 bad weather hampered agricultural output, reversing five years of steady overall annual production growth. Then, during the almost two years of Marxist rule under Taraki and Amin, political disruptions adversely affected the economy, pulling it down by a total of 7.3 percent. In 1980, during the first year of Soviet occupation, gross domestic production fell another 2.6 percent.³²

What these statistics show is that from the end of 1975 through 1983, while the rest of the world mostly was experiencing economic growth, Afghanistan was going downhill. According to IMF statistics, Afghanistan's gross domestic product at the end of 1980 was little higher than what it was at the end of 1971, nine years earlier. By

the end of 1983 the level of annual output probably was equivalent to some year in the 1940s.

AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT SLUMPS The food grain picture particularly was bad. The exodus of several million farm families and the destruction of many irrigation networks by the fighting caused wheat and other crops to suffer. French medical doctors working in areas under resistance control—areas that counted for as much as 85 percent of the country's land—frequently commented on the shortage of food and mounting malnutrition.³³

Some farmers who took refuge in Pakistan returned to their plots during the growing season to plant and tend their crops. But the overall cultivation of food crops declined significantly. According to one unofficial estimate, cultivated acreage declined from 3.3 million hectares (9.1 million acres) in 1975 to about 1.25 million hectares (3.4 million acres) in 1982.³⁴

The disruption in agriculture also was indicated by administrative problems experienced by the Agricultural Development Bank, an important government agency in encouraging fertilizer use. Between 1977 and 1982, the number of its employees was halved; its loan collection rate dropped from 70 percent to a miserable 0.06 percent in 1982.³⁵

Perhaps the most comprehensive agricultural survey was carried out in March 1983 by a team of eight Afghan university graduates, working under the supervision of Professor Azam Gul, an agronomist formerly with the Faculty of Agriculture, Kabul University. Interviews with 705 refugee farmers from 602 villages representing all Afghan provinces revealed the following information:³⁶

- Agricultural production had fallen dramatically. In 1982 food production was only 20 to 25 percent of that in 1978. Wheat, the staple crop, was at 20 percent of the 1978 level; corn, 23 percent; rice, 26 percent; barley, 26 percent; and cotton, 12 percent.

- While 46 percent of the land of the average farm was cultivated in 1978, only 16 percent was cultivated in 1982. Labor shortages were cited as the major cause for reduced acreage. In 1978 a farm utilized an average of 4.6 laborers; by 1982 the number was only 2.2 laborers. Fully 52 percent of the farm labor force was absent, because of such reasons as DRA military conscription, flight to Pakistan, service with the guerrillas, and casualties from bombing. Additional reasons for reduced acreage cultivation were military

actions, higher prices for oxen, and shortages of gasoline and repair mechanics.

- Yield per acre was down for all crops; for example, wheat output was 54 percent of the 1978 yield. Reasons were inadequacy of irrigation water, non-availability of fertilizer, and destruction of crops.

- Agricultural production shortfalls were spread throughout the country, and not restricted to any particular region. Among the worst hit provinces were Kabul and Kandahar. Kabul province produced only 2 percent of the wheat produced in 1978.

By the end of 1983 Afghanistan's agriculture seemingly also was the victim of the Soviet Union's overriding counterinsurgency policy. The Soviet Union appeared more intent on destroying the economy in resistance-held areas, meaning most of the countryside, than in encouraging production to support the population. Many farmers reported that tilling their fields was dangerous during daylight hours, because patrolling Soviet aircraft often would fire on any seen human or on livestock.

A need to import food indicated that a decline in production indeed had occurred. Afghanistan traditionally had been self-sufficient in foodstuffs; wheat and other basic foodstuffs were imported only during years of drought. After the Soviet invasion, however, importation of food became an annual affair, most of it from the Soviet Union. In addition to decreased overall food production, two further reasons made imports necessary:

- Such surplus foodgrains as might be available in insurgent-controlled areas did not reach the cities.

- The population of the main cities, notably Kabul, was swollen by the influx of refugees from the countryside.

In 1981 Moscow shipped in 74,000 tons of wheat; in 1982, 115,000 tons.¹⁷ More was to come in 1983.

In October 1982 Babrak warned the nation that because of food shortages the government would have to import 150,000 to 200,000 tons of wheat, 30,000 tons of rice, 17,000 tons of vegetable oil, 70,000 tons of sugar, and thousands of tons of dairy products. If the cause of these food shortages was not solved, he warned, the problem would get "larger and larger and will be beyond the country's control."¹⁸

The problem was not solved. In November 1983 the Soviets announced that they would supply 20,000 tons of wheat immediately and promised another 180,000 tons over the next year.³⁹

INDUSTRY SUFFERS The situation in the small industrial sector (all government owned) was, if anything, worse than in agriculture. The flight of workers to Pakistan and Iran and insurgent attacks caused plants to be shut down and virtually stopped all new industrial projects. At a party conference in March 1982 Babrak listed some enterprises disabled by the resistance: "the cement factory in Herat, the textile mills in Herat and Kandahar, sugar factories, and irrigation establishments."⁴⁰

As for electricity production, Prime Minister Keshtmand publicly admitted in 1983 to the destruction of several power stations; Kabul residents complained of frequent power blackouts in 1983. According to a resistance group spokesman from the Kandahar area, only one of the two turbines of the American-built hydroelectric power station at Kajakai at the head of the Helmand Valley was operating.⁴¹

Assuredly, therefore, industrial output as a whole had plunged since the Soviet invasion. A graphic account of developments in Afghanistan's largest textile mill, the Afghan Textile Corporation at Bagrami north of Kabul, was given as follows by the defecting mill administrator, Ali Shah Qayumi, in December 1981:

Before the April 1978 coup, production reached 80,000 meters of fabric a day. At present, the production of 15,000 meters is achieved with difficulty. Of the original work force of 4,000, only 1,800 remain. Khalqis and Parchamis on the staff are armed and employed on security duties. Some workshops have been turned into prisons where dissident workers are held, beaten, and interrogated. Of the factory's original transport fleet of 33 trucks, nine were burnt by the resistance and two captured. Three Soviet advisers control the textile mill. The mill has been attacked three times, causing considerable damage and heavy losses among the party activists.⁴²

NATURAL GAS OUTPUT INCREASES TEMPORARILY The only important sector of the economy that functioned almost normally was the natural gas industry. The main field was located near the Soviet border, and a 12-mile pipeline pumped all but a small amount of

the output to the Soviet Union. Proceeds from the exported gas financed much of the Afghan government budget, paid some of Afghanistan's mounting debt to the Soviet Union, and provided a substantial credit for Afghanistan in the barter trade accounting system between the two countries.⁴³

In 1980 a second nearby gas field came into production; the output of this field also went to the Soviet Union. For that year, total gas output and exports reached record high levels. Thereafter, output declined annually, apparently because of insurgent attacks on the pipeline and gas fields, despite being guarded by Soviet troops. The pipeline itself was cut at least three times, and possibly as often as seven times up to the end of 1983.⁴⁴

HOW FAR HAD THE ECONOMY DECLINED? Though the Babrak government claimed that under its rule the economy grew every year by at least 2 percent, most outside economists disputed this claim.⁴⁵

In this author's view, a decline of 25 to 30 percent during the four years of 1980 to 1983 is a reasonable estimate.

DOMESTIC FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

Under the 1978-79 Taraki-Amin regimes, inflation had been severe. And it continued so under Babrak. The official consumer price index admitted to increases of 13 percent in FY 1981 and 22 percent in FY 1982, compared to 10 percent in FY 1980. But the real rise in prices was by all accounts higher and inflation continued in FY 1983 and FY 1984. The actual rate of annual inflation probably was in the region of 16 to 20 percent; and the four-year price increase probably was between 80 and 100 percent.

Commodity shortages and government-deficit financing accounted for the inflation. IMF figures show a money supply increase of 42 percent during the two-and-a-quarter years from the end of 1979 to the end of March 1982. Net domestic credit claims on government (probably representing mostly deficit financing and loans to hard-pressed state enterprises) rose 88 percent from the end of 1980 to the end of the first quarter of 1982, a period of just a year and a quarter.⁴⁶

The inflation certainly was not planned by the Babrak government. In one of his first economic statements, in February 1980, Babrak blamed higher prices and shortages on traitors and imperialist

agents. He assured the public that "quantities of the people's basic commodities . . . have been placed at our disposal by the Soviet Union."⁴⁷ Some food prices did in fact decline in 1980, but shortages and inflation soon once again were in evidence. In Kabul and other cities, rationing was instituted, with government employees and party members enjoying special access to subsidized food and other commodities in short supply.

Oddly enough, in this environment of food rationing and shortages one could freely buy Japanese-made radios and other electronic equipment in Kabul. The government made no attempt to control the private money bazaar. There an open, legal, freely fluctuating exchange rate enabled bazaar traders to import Western-made consumer items that were attractive to Afghans and Soviets alike.

THE GOVERNMENT BUDGET

For many years before the 1978 Marxist coup the Afghan government deliberately budgeted for and experienced an annual budget deficit. From a monetary point of view, the deficit was neutralized by foreign aid that covered the gap between revenues and expenditures. After the Soviet invasion in late 1979, the annual revenue shortfall was financed both by foreign aid (mostly Soviet) and by monetary deficit financing by the central bank. The exact proportion of Soviet budgetary assistance is not clear, but it was substantial; it covered as much as 30 percent of the Afghan budget. According to one source, it amounted to \$50 million a year since 1978.⁴⁸ It would have been even higher had not the Soviets agreed to raise the price they paid for Afghan natural gas.

In April 1983, without disclosing any details, Prime Minister Keshtmand claimed that the budget had been balanced for the just-ended 1983 fiscal year. He warned, though, that the FY 1984 budget would not balance and that serious remedial measures would have to be taken.⁴⁹ The main source of government revenue came from export taxes levied on gas shipped to the Soviet Union. These taxes climbed from 17 percent of revenues in FY 1979 to an estimated 45 percent in FY 1983. The adverse effect of the insurgency on revenues was revealed by the admission that income from property taxes—never significant—had dropped from Afghanis 280 million (\$6.2 million) in FY 1979 to a mere Afghanis 16 million (\$400,000) in FY 1981.⁵⁰

As for expenditures, the Babrak government claimed that the traditionally largest item, defense spending, accounted for no more than 22 percent. This was a smaller share than the 26 percent often allocated to defense in the years before the 1978 coup. This 1983 figure probably was inaccurate, and it certainly was misleading. Real defense expenditures must have been higher. But they probably were hidden, or washed out for accounting purposes, by grants of Soviet military equipment. The fact that the DRA armed forces were one-third to one-half the size of the 1977 armed forces did mean that fewer soldiers had to be paid; however, army pay had been significantly increased to make military service more attractive.

Whatever the case, the budget as a whole was relevant mainly to Kabul; this relevance partly was because the resistance controlled most of the countryside, and also because little money went to the provinces. A defecting senior DRA official, who attended a meeting of provincial governors in Kabul in June 1981, reported that several governors had made the following complaints:

- They received little money.
- Their provincial budgets were on paper only.
- At times they could not even pay the salaries of the police.⁵¹

THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

Almost annually before the 1978 leftist coup, Afghanistan had enjoyed a surplus in its balance of payments. This surplus translated into a steady growth in foreign exchange reserves. During the Soviet occupation, the situation was reversed—the deterioration in external accounts grew worse with each year, starting about FY 1982. Several factors caused this reversal, including a dramatic drop in workers' remittances from abroad, negligible income from tourism, and a substantial decline in economic aid from Western countries and international agencies.

By December 1983 Afghanistan's convertible monetary reserves (such as foreign exchange and IMF Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)) were only 49 percent of their 1979 level, having fallen from \$441 million to \$214 million. By the end of 1984, they were up 7 percent, to \$229 million.⁵²

According to a defecting senior official of the Afghan Ministry of Mines and Industry, gold reserves, once kept in the basement of the Presidential Palace and valued in 1981 at \$245 million,⁵³ were

moved to the Soviet Union for safekeeping.⁵⁴ This report has not been corroborated by other sources, but it is plausible.

FOREIGN TRADE IS REDIRECTED Afghanistan traditionally experienced a deficit in its trade balance, with the value of imports always exceeding exports. As explained above, the gap was financed by remittances from workers abroad, tourism receipts, and foreign aid. After the Soviet intervention, the trade imbalance continued; in fact, it grew slightly to an estimated \$210 million. Exports were valued in FY 1983 at around \$670 million and imports at \$880 million.

With the Soviet occupation in late December 1979, a large change occurred in the relative importance of traditional exports. Natural gas exports increased in importance, accounting by 1981 for as much as 40 percent of the value of exports. In 1983, natural gas accounted for 80 percent of Afghanistan's exports to the Soviet Union. Most other export items—such as fruits and nuts, karakul (lamb fur) skins, and carpets—declined in importance.

One of the most flourishing export items was illegal—opium. Of the several hundred tons of opium produced annually in insurgent-controlled areas, most were sold in Pakistan and Iran.⁵⁵ Pakistani authorities claimed that the Babrak government not only tolerated opium cultivation and refineries, but actively encouraged them for the debilitating effect they might have on anti-Soviet nations.⁵⁶

On the import side, the most interesting feature was the continued importing by private traders of nonessential consumer items, such as Japanese radios and other electronic items. The banks (all state owned) did not provide financing or foreign exchange for these items. But Kabul's money bazaar shopkeepers were allowed to provide financing at a freely fluctuating bazaar exchange rate. In 1983 this exchange rate usually was 70 percent higher than the official rate (Afghanis 94 per dollar in the bazaar versus Afghanis 55-56 per dollar at the banks) used for government and state enterprise transactions.

The most striking aspect of Afghanistan's trade was the mammoth shift in the direction of trade to the Soviet Union. While the USSR already was Afghanistan's major trading partner, its dominance became very pronounced after the 1978 coup, particularly after the Soviet occupation. In the fiscal year before the 1978 Marxist coup the USSR accounted for 37 percent of Afghanistan's exports and 23

percent of its imports. By FY 1983 its share had increased to 58 percent of Afghanistan's exports and at least 65 percent of its imports.⁵⁷

No other country approached the position of the Soviet Union as a trading partner. The importance of Afghanistan for USSR trade, however, was negligible. Soviet exports to Afghanistan represented less than 1 percent of Soviet world exports.⁵⁸

Afghanistan continued to have some trade relations with non-communist countries. But the percentage share of these countries was



Photo by author

Carpets for sale in Mazar-i-Sharif

low by official figures. Pakistan was the largest non-communist market for exports (9 percent); Japan was the largest source for imports (9 percent).

Much of the trade with Pakistan, however, was unrecorded, so the importance of Pakistan officially was understated. Trading was common back and forth across the long border, which usually was controlled by resistance forces, and therefore was outside the purview of DRA customs officials. Goods exported illegally to Pakistan from resistance-held areas were firewood and opium; goods imported in exchange were salt, sugar, tea, and consumer items like blankets. This unofficial trade apparently was growing.⁵⁹

A reasonable estimate of this illegal trade was that its value equalled the official trade that took place with Pakistan via the two highway border points (about \$60 million per year). As for Afghanistan's trade with the United States, as shown in table 8, US exports to Afghanistan declined dramatically after 1979, reflecting the cutoff of US economic aid. But US imports of Afghan goods remained remarkably constant.

Table 8

US-Afghanistan trade⁶⁰ (In \$ millions)

Year	US exports to Afghanistan	US imports from Afghanistan
1979	66	12
1980	11	6
1981	6	13
1982	10	11
1983	5	8
1984	8	13

US imports from Afghanistan in 1984 included licorice root, cashmere goat hair, and oriental rugs. US exports to Afghanistan mostly were aircraft parts, cigarettes, and second-hand clothing.⁶¹

FOREIGN DEBT BURDEN IS MANAGEABLE Afghanistan's foreign debt more than doubled after the 1978 coup, but the amount

still was reasonable by world standards. At the time of the 1978 coup, the Afghan foreign debt stood at \$1.8 billion. By the end of FY 1982 the country's foreign debt had almost doubled to \$3.5 billion; as much as 73 percent was owed to the USSR. As a percentage of exports of goods and services, the debt service ratio amounted to about 15 percent. This ratio conventionally was considered tolerable by world standards.

Little is known about the composition of Afghanistan's debt to the Soviet Union. What is known is that in FY 1981 the USSR granted Afghanistan a one-year moratorium on interest payments. Generally, Soviet loans carried a low interest rate. Before the 1978 coup, the loans given to Afghanistan bore interest rates of 2 and 3 percent, with a repayment period commonly of 30 years. After the Soviet intervention, debt owed to the Soviet Union was known to have risen sharply to probably \$2.5 billion; corroborative data, however, is lacking.

Following the Soviet occupation, Afghanistan continued to honor its debt service payments to foreign countries, including the United States. (Afghanistan's official debt to the United States at the end of 1982 was approximately \$81 million.)⁶²

ECONOMIC AID Figures on aid flows are both scarce and confusing. A statement in the FY 1984 Socio-Economic Development Plan provides the latest available information on sources of Afghanistan's foreign economic aid. The statement claimed that 88 percent would come from the Soviet-dominated members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), of which 76 percent would be from the Soviet Union.⁶³ Not disclosed was information about the amount of aid or the donors of the other 12 percent of non-COMECON aid.

After the Soviet intervention, virtually all aid to Afghanistan from Western countries and international development agencies ceased. India was about the only non-Soviet-bloc country continuing aid. Most UN and international development agencies gave as their reason for suspending aid the general insecurity that made project implementation and inspection unsafe or impossible. What happened to once substantial flows of foreign aid from the United States and international agencies is dramatically evident in table 9.

Table 9
Economic aid from the United States
and international agencies⁶⁴ (In \$ millions)

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
US Economic Aid:	10.6	0	0	0	0	0
Loans	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grants	10.6	0	0	0	0	0
Eximbank	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Agencies:	89.5	2.0	2.1	7.3	0.8	0
IBRD	0	0	0	0	0	0
IDA	55.1	0	0	0	0	0
ADB	20.1	0	0	0	0	0
UNDP	14.3	2.0	2.1	7.3	0.8	0
IMF SDRs:	0	0	0	0	0	0

In September 1983 the Kabul government (which had not withdrawn from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the International Bank for Reconstruction or Development (IBRD)) appealed for more international assistance. Speaking before the IMF-IBRD annual meeting, Afghan Central Bank Governor Mehrabuddin Paktiawal declared that Afghanistan was in "dire need" of help. He begged for resumption of international institutional aid, such as the release of \$76 million in IBRD loans suspended after the Soviet intervention.⁶⁵

SOVIET ECONOMIC AID Sorting out aid to Afghanistan from Soviet statements is nearly impossible. The Soviets usually included aid given before their invasion, but with no breakdown of total figures. In January 1984 the Babrak government claimed that since the beginning of Soviet economic aid in the pre-coup years, some 170 economic projects had been completed or were under construction. The total value of Soviet aid from 1954 to 1984 was said to be \$3,215 million.⁶⁶ During the period 1982-84 some 16 Soviet projects (again not specified) were declared completed.⁶⁷

This aid is detailed in table 10.

Table 10

USSR: Economic credits and grants extended to Afghanistan⁶⁸
(in \$ millions)

1954-84	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
3,215	705	25	90	370	325

In 1986 the US Department of State also gave the data shown in table 11.

Table 11

Eastern European economic aid to Afghanistan⁶⁹ (in \$ millions)

1954-84	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
210	135	—	—	—	NEGL

What the US Department of State shows in table 11 is that economic aid from Eastern Europe substantially increased, in fact, in one year, 1980, and then seemingly stopped. The Soviet Union undoubtedly put pressure on its Eastern European satellites to share some of the financial burden of propping up the Babrak regime. Czechoslovakia agreed to take over the US-assisted Helmand Valley irrigation project; Bulgaria took on some agricultural aid projects; and East Germany supplied communications and power equipment.⁷⁰

Much of the Soviet aid was in grants, in contrast to earlier years when it was mostly loans. In July 1980 then Deputy Prime Minister and Planning Minister Sultan Ali Keshtmand stated that "the USSR has given us large quantities of goods while everything we have exported to the USSR has been paid for."⁷¹

A substantial but hidden part of Soviet aid was funneled through the higher prices paid for Afghan natural gas. The price paid more than doubled after the 1978 leftist coup. Tax receipts and "foreign exchange" earned from this export commodity (as previously mentioned) served to pay off part of Afghanistan's foreign debt to the USSR and to provide credits for the purchase of goods from the Soviet Union. The price the Soviets pay for this gas, however, reportedly is still lower than world prices, including what the Soviet Union charges its West European customers.

ECONOMIC COST TO THE SOVIETS FOR THEIR OCCUPATION Estimates of economic costs to the Soviets for their occupation of Afghanistan vary widely; none has been accompanied by any breakdown of figures. The US Government has estimated that the cost to the Soviet Union of its four years of occupation was \$12 billion by the end of 1983; and that the cost of 1984 was \$4 billion.⁷²

Of the estimated \$800 million in economic support to the Babrak government to March 1983, probably half was in grants.⁷³ Other estimates range from \$3 million per day to as high as \$15 million per day.⁷⁴ The author believes the *Time* figure of \$8 million per day to be a reasonable guess for 1983. This figure translates to an annual figure of \$2.9 billion for 1983, of which perhaps \$2 billion was related to military costs.⁷⁵

Though this financial burden was well within the means of the USSR, it still was a significant cost. An official of the Soviet Academy of Science's Institute for Oriental Studies commented that "in economic terms, Afghanistan (has) become another backward republic of the Soviet Union whose deficits and development expenses (have) to be met from Moscow."⁷⁶

The military cost of the war against the resistance assuredly was borne mostly by the Soviets. They picked up the tab not only for operating their own armed forces, but also for the arms and ammunition they provided to the DRA armed forces. The Soviets also probably bore the cost of military infrastructure projects; these projects included barracks, storehouses, longer runways, and military defense works about the major towns and military installations. Probably the only financial military burden the DRA government had to bear was that of salaries and ordinary maintenance costs of the DRA military.

GROWING SOVIET CONTROL OVER THE ECONOMY An indication of the Soviet Union's new stake in the Afghan economy was revealed by DRA Prime Minister Keshtmand in March 1984. In a public statement, he revealed that 70 percent of the industrial production of the public sector was produced by "Afghan-Soviet joint enterprises."⁷⁷

These enterprises were not disclosed. But what is significant is that before the December 1979 Soviet invasion no such joint enterprises existed. What probably happened was that after the intervention the Soviets took over most of the few existing state industrial enterprises, ran them for Soviet benefit, and called them "joint enterprises."

SOVIET EXPLOITATION AND SELF-INTEREST IN ITS ECONOMIC RELATIONS

In reviewing the record of Afghanistan's economic relations with the Soviet Union, particularly in the area of economic aid, two obvious factors stand out:

- One factor is the military significance of many Soviet economic aid projects, even in the pre-coup years.
- The other factor is the often direct economic benefit of these projects to the Soviet Union.

Some aid projects tied Afghanistan's foreign trade more tightly to the Soviet Union, making Afghanistan an even more dependent client state.

Before the 1978 coup, observers from foreign and Western governments were well aware of the military applicability of many Soviet aid projects. Prominent among such projects were the two all-weather north-south highways; one ran from Heyretan (on the border river) to Kabul, and the other ran from Torghundi (on the border) to Kandahar. Culverts and bridges were made unusually strong, presumably to bear the heaviest Soviet battle tank.⁷⁸

As part of the roads project, the Soviets constructed the world's highest and longest vehicle tunnel through the Hindu Kush mountains, under the Salang Pass, at 11,000 feet elevation. In all, some 2,500 kilometers (1,552.5 miles) of roads were built with Soviet help.⁷⁹

Other Soviet projects included the expansion of most of the country's airports. After the Soviet invasion, when most Soviet development projects fell far behind schedule, two with military significance were completed ahead of time:

- One of these completed projects was the 816-meter-long (2,652 feet) highway and railway bridge over the Amu Darya river, the only bridge across this river, which separates the USSR from Afghanistan.

- The second such project was a satellite communications and television receiving station in Kabul. This station gave Moscow a better communications link with Afghanistan and provided the means to project political propaganda around the country.⁸⁰

For years, the Soviets had pressed the Afghans to agree to the bridge project, but before the 1978 coup the Afghans had demurred. They expressed privately to Western diplomats their fear that a bridge would make it easier for the Soviets to invade the country, should they choose to do so.

In addition to the Amu Darya bridge and the satellite ground station, other economic projects with clear military applications were the following: a \$200 million power transmission project; truck maintenance and other bridge and oil storage projects that would support the Soviet military presence;⁸¹ and a petroleum pipeline from the Soviet border to *Pul-i-Khumri* below the Salang Pass. Although some sabotage was done to this important line, a guerrilla commander from nearby Kunduz province said some *mujahidin* preferred to tap the line at night and carry off the petroleum supplies for resistance use.⁸²

SOVIET INTEREST IN AFGHANISTAN'S MINERAL RESOURCES

Soviet interest in Afghan mineral resources was not new, but dated back some 30 years. And this interest became much more evident after the Soviet invasion. For decades before 1980, knowledgeable Afghans and foreign geologists were aware that Afghanistan possessed rich deposits of minerals, including natural gas. The main problem was how to market them. The Soviet Union was an obvious market. But before the 1978 leftist coup the Afghan government was reluctant to make itself dependent solely on this market, for both political and economic reasons. The Soviets never were willing to buy

Afghan products for convertible foreign exchange; they always insisted that purchases be on a barter basis.

The early interest of the Soviets in Afghanistan's mineral deposits possibly was derived from the fact that the Ferghana Valley in the USSR, only a few hundred kilometers (a couple of hundred miles) to the north, was geologically similar to Afghanistan and contained vast mineral wealth. In the 1950s the Soviets successfully pressured the Afghan government not to permit geological exploration by Western nationals in the provinces bordering the Soviet Union, ostensibly for security reasons. In place of Westerners, the Soviets offered their own services; in 1957 the Afghans agreed. Thereafter, the Soviets, and to a lesser extent the Czechs, enjoyed monopoly rights to explore, drill, and mine in the northern half of Afghanistan.

After Daoud's 1973 coup, Western technical advisers gradually were removed from geological exploration activities and also from the Ministry of Mines and Industries. Replacements came mostly from the Soviet Union. Also as a result of Soviet pressure, the Afghan Cartographic Institute—the repository of geologic maps and reports—became a classified organization, readily open only to Soviet personnel. Outsiders, even UN personnel, generally were unable to obtain access to the Institute's material.⁸³

Before the Soviet invasion in late December 1979, Soviet geoscientists in Afghanistan tended to minimize the importance of the country's deposits of iron, coal, oil, chrome, and uranium. After the takeover, however, Soviet geological advisers reversed their former opinions and recommended intensive mining operations. The about-face strongly suggests that the Soviets knew all along about the importance of Afghanistan's mineral resources; but they apparently were unwilling to disclose the impressive nature of these resources until they were in a position to do something about it.⁸⁴

The existence of excellent mineral resources was in fact revealed publicly only once before the 1978 coup, in a little-known survey study financed by the UN Development Program (UNDP); this study was called *Mineral Resources of Afghanistan* (1977). It was prepared by a nine-person Soviet team that identified 78 commercially significant mineral deposits. A few of these deposits were judged, in a concurrent but more restrictive UNDP-financed Canadian geological study, as being of world significance.⁸⁵

The most important deposits were of natural gas and oil, copper, iron ore, and coal. They are discussed below.

NATURAL GAS Natural gas currently is Afghanistan's single most important economic resource. Reserves in 1977 were estimated at more than 500 billion cubic meters. The main field of the two being exploited is located near the Soviet border; a 12-mile-long Soviet-built pipeline pumps all but a small amount of the output to the USSR. Agreements with the Soviets call for the export of 2.5 million cubic meters annually up to 1985. But this amount was exceeded twice after the Soviet occupation.⁸⁶

The price the Soviets paid for this gas provides an illuminating insight into Soviet objectives. For the first 10 years after the gas started flowing north in 1968, the prime Soviet objective was to purchase the gas as cheaply as possible. A former Afghan Minister of Mines and Industry (1975-78), Abdul Tawab Assifi, has disclosed that although the basic agreement called for prices to be mutually determined, in practice the "Soviet Union determined the price it would pay and controlled all information regarding the amount of gas imported, the payment due Afghanistan, and other such details."⁸⁷

Initially, the Soviets paid a price (\$16.20 per 1,000 cubic meters) that was no more than 20 percent of the going world market price. As late as 1977 they were buying Afghan gas for a third of what they paid for Iranian gas. (The Soviets demanded that Iran keep secret its higher price, but the Iranians leaked it to the Afghans.) When the Afghans pressed for a higher price in 1977-78, the Soviets claimed that the higher Iranian price was due to a higher gas-caloric content. This claim was true, but the caloric difference was only 15 to 20 percent.⁸⁸

Three days before the 1978 Marxist coup, the Soviets agreed to increase—somewhat retroactively—the price of gas (to \$37 per 1,000 cubic meters), but this price still was only about one-fifth of comparable international prices. The Soviet negotiators argued that Moscow was entitled to lower prices since the exploration and development of Afghanistan's gas resources had been done on favorable Soviet aid terms. Furthermore, if the gas were not sold to the Soviet Union, they argued, it would not be exported at all because of geographical considerations. When, in the two years before the 1978 coup, the Ministry of Mines and Industry developed plans for piping gas from

fields in the north to Afghan locations such as Kabul, the Soviets refused to provide any assistance to the project.⁸⁹

Most astonishing was that gas sold to the Soviets was metered on the Soviet side of the border for accounting and crediting purposes; Afghan officials were not permitted to check the meters.⁹⁰ In retrospect, it is amazing that any Afghan government would agree to such terms. Apparently, the Afghans protested the metering arrangement; but they should have been willing to shut down the field until the Soviets allowed this elementary right of checking.

After the 1978 coup—and particularly after the occupation—the Soviets doubled the price of gas in several increments, to \$83 per 1,000 cubic meters, to hide their economic support to the Kabul government. Still, economic considerations of Soviet self-interest prevailed to keep the price lower than the world market prices. The \$83 price was still lower than average prices for Soviet gas delivered to Western Europe in 1979.⁹¹

OIL Five major sedimentary basins, with hydrocarbon possibilities of 12 million tons or 90 million barrels of petroleum, exist in Jowzjan and Herat provinces. But little has been exploited.⁹²

Before the 1978 coup, the Soviet Union took a small amount of oil, in the range of a few thousand tons per year. Then, in 1979, the Soviets began to develop three of the five known fields and planned to build a small refinery. The current status of these oil projects is not known. But they likely have come to a halt because of guerrilla activity.⁹³

COPPER, IRON ORE, AND COAL Impressive **copper** deposits exist at Ainak, in a mountainous area south of Kabul, amounting to 480 million tons of ore. The richness of the deposit led the Babrak government to build a smelter there. This smelter, when completed, will produce copper equivalent to 2 percent of the world's production. The entire output is to go to the Soviet Union.⁹⁴

Even more impressive are Afghanistan's **iron ore** deposits of one billion tons, located at remote Hajigak in the mountainous center of Afghanistan. This range is the third largest iron ore deposit in the world, larger even than the Mesabi Range in Minnesota. For years the main constraint to exploitation was the high transportation

cost—whether by rail, road, or slurry*—to bring it to world markets. In the 1970s, the Iranians financed a French railroad feasibility study, to link the mine with the Iranian rail network to the Persian Gulf. But after the Shah fell the Iranians lost interest. The Soviets have indicated an intention to build a rail line to transport the ore to the Soviet Union. But control of the mine region by resistance forces has, for the moment, made exploitation impractical.⁹⁵

Coal deposits in Afghanistan are vast and often of high grade; extensive exploitation is planned by the Babrak regime. Some coal already was being mined before the 1978 coup; all of it was used within Afghanistan.⁹⁶

CEMENT Afghanistan is well situated to produce cement, and it has huge deposits of limestone. In 1977 eight quarries and two cement plants were operating. Plans have been announced for two more cement plants to provide an exportable surplus.⁹⁷

In this connection, a peculiar trade protocol was signed between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union in 1981 providing for the exchange of each other's cement, ton for ton. This unusual arrangement hardly seems beneficial to Afghanistan, since Soviet cement is of inferior quality and unsalable in world markets, whereas Afghan cement always has met international standards.⁹⁸

THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF SOVIET OCCUPATION SAW the Afghan economy tied more closely to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union's share of Afghanistan's trade doubled, to account for more than 60 percent of combined exports and imports. The DRA government has admitted that for FY 1984 some 76 percent of the country's economic aid came from the Soviet Union; but the figure in reality probably was closer to 90 percent. Though the approximately \$800 million in Soviet economic support largely has been free of charge, some 73 percent of the country's outstanding foreign debt now is owed to the Soviet Union.

*A watery mixture or suspension of insoluble material. Iron ore may be transported over long distances as a slurry via pipeline; this method of transmission is economical between large producing areas and markets in which large tonnages are used at a fairly uniform rate. When slurry reaches its destination, the material is separated from the water before use or further processing.

Soviet influence over the Afghan economy can be discerned in other ways as well. The 5,000 to 8,000 Soviet and Eastern European technicians seemingly run the non-subsistence part of the economy. Soviet technicians prepare the annual socioeconomic development plan and have controlling policy influence in every ministry. Russian has replaced English as the working foreign language; Afghans studying abroad do so mostly in the Soviet Union. In 1981 Afghan students in the USSR numbered 8,700,⁹⁹ many times more than the number studying elsewhere.

The Soviets expect to be in Afghanistan for a long time. This fact was made evident by two geologic reports found on the person of the captured chief Soviet geologist, Okhrimiuk, in 1981. Reference was made in both reports to detailed Soviet plans for exploitation of mineral deposits through 1990.¹⁰⁰

The Okhrimiuk papers and diary also provided an insight into the effectiveness of the resistance. In a report dated 10 January 1981 Okhrimiuk states "the present situation excludes the carrying out of geological work without dependable protection by Soviet troops." Regarding the copper mine project at Ainak, Okhrimiuk noted 26 guerrilla attacks by resistance fighters during the 11-month period, 1 June 1980 to 4 July 1981. He also cited 40 instances of destruction of Soviet drilling sites, trucks, and technical equipment. Damage inflicted by the resistance to mining plants and equipment in Kabul province was estimated at Afghani 108.4 million (\$2 million).¹⁰¹

On account of the widespread fighting—and especially the Soviet counterinsurgency practice of trying to destroy the economic base of the resistance in rural areas—agricultural production and the economic infrastructure of the country have been badly damaged. Two respected scholars have well described the situation as follows:

*Not since the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century has the systematic destruction of an economy been attempted on such a grand scale. There are parts of Afghanistan, such as the Sistan, which have never recovered from the Mongol depredations though they were at one time highly productive areas. This type of destruction is being repeated now in some of the most productive areas of present-day Afghanistan.*¹⁰²

The Secret Police (KHAD) and Human Rights

Excellency, Amnesty International has been gravely concerned by reports we have received regarding the ill-treatment of detainees in the custody of Khad.

*Amnesty International letter to
President Babrak Karmal
7 October 1983*



SINCE THE 1978 MARXIST COUP AND THE SUBSEQUENT Soviet invasion, human rights have been violated in Afghanistan on a scale unprecedented in recent history. The Taraki and Amin governments set a standard for brutality that was matched by few governments anywhere since World War II. Babrak Karmal described it as "a machinery of terror and suppression . . . tyranny and torture," seeking to distance his government from its predecessor.¹

Yet within six months, Babrak's government itself was following the repressive practices of its predecessors: torture, trumped-up confessions, and executions without trial. After initially emptying the jails of most political prisoners, the Babrak regime soon filled them up again. In 1982, Freedom House in New York City was so horrified at the record of the Babrak regime that it gave Afghanistan its lowest rating in the categories of political rights and civil liberties.²

As in the Taraki-Amin governments, the main agent for political coercion and human rights violations was the Afghan secret police; the secret police usually was called in the Babrak regime by its acronym, KHAD (*Kheda-mati-i-Etal'at-i-Dolati*, or State Information Service). With Soviet KGB guidance and support, KHAD became a fearsome agent of terror.

In the countryside, where the resistance was in virtual control, rivalries among competing guerrilla groups sometimes led to multiple taxation, bloodshed, and banditry. While the human rights situation in such areas was not always ideal, it was far better than in areas controlled by the Babrak regime and Soviet forces.

And the outlook for improvement in the overall human rights situation was poor.

THE SECRET POLICE—KHAD

Afghanistan has a long history of secret police. Almost every regime up to modern times had employed internal spies to keep the government informed of plots against it. After World War II, several overlapping intelligence services were established, both civilian and military, to uncover plots and watch each other. None was efficient, as evidenced by the ease with which the 1973 and 1978 coups were carried out.³

After the 1978 leftist coup, the three Marxist governments that followed assigned high priority to developing an efficient secret police service. Within months of the coup, the Soviet KGB and the East Germans were brought in as advisers. After the Soviet invasion, effective control over the secret police apparently passed from the Afghans to the Soviets.

During President Taraki's administration, the secret police was called AGSA (*Da Afghanistan da Gato da Satalo Adara*, or Afghan Interests Protection Service). For its director, Taraki appointed a *Khalq*-faction party member, Assadulah Sarwari, soon to be nicknamed "King Kong" or "The Butcher." According to one account, he used to amuse himself by touring interrogation cells and stubbing out his cigarettes in the eye sockets of political prisoners.⁴

When Hafizullah Amin replaced Taraki as President in September 1979, Sarwari took refuge in the Soviet Embassy. In his place,

Amin appointed Aziz Ahmed Akbari. At the same time, the secret police was renamed KAM (*Kargari Astekhbarati Muassessa*, or Workers Intelligence Institute). Akbari lasted barely two months before he in turn was replaced by Amin's nephew, Assadullah Amin. This nephew was soon to regret his appointment. After only a few weeks as KAM Director General he was wounded in an assassination attempt and went to the USSR for medical treatment. After the Soviet invasion he was returned to Afghanistan and was executed in June 1980.

Assadullah Amin's two predecessors, who had far worse records on human rights violations, were luckier. After the Soviet invasion, Sarwari emerged from asylum in the Soviet Embassy and was named Deputy Prime Minister and Vice President of the Revolutionary Council. This appointment was made on Soviet insistence to have some *Khalq*-faction representation in the cabinet. But those who had been tortured on Sarwari's orders in 1978, including Deputy Prime Minister Sultan Ali Keshtmand, found his presence intolerable. In June 1980, Sarwari was sent to Moscow for medical treatment; two months later he was assigned to Ulan Bator, Mongolia, as Afghan Ambassador.

As for Akbari, President Amin had appointed him Afghan Ambassador to Iraq; Babrak then transferred (and demoted) him to deputy chief of mission at the Afghan Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria. Later Akbari was sent to Ulan Bator, Mongolia, as First Secretary under Ambassador Sarwari, his predecessor as secret police chief. Akbari reportedly has never returned to Afghanistan.

After the Soviet invasion, the secret police service was renamed again—this time as the KHAD. Appointed as Director General was Dr. Najibullah, a physician and cousin of Babrak Karmal. Under Najibullah's nominal direction, and with the close assistance and strong support of the Soviet KGB, the KHAD greatly expanded in size and became a dreaded and pervasive organ of government repression.

KHAD reported directly to the Prime Minister's Office and probably also to the Soviet Embassy. Its budget was enormous, said to be larger than the entire government budget of the past 10 years.⁷ The number of employees expanded vastly to between 15,000 and

30,000 full-time operatives, with perhaps another 100,000 paid informers.⁶

KHAD employees were among the highest paid persons in the DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) government and enjoyed numerous privileges. Many were sent to the USSR, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria for training, usually for three to six months, including instruction in interrogation and torture techniques.⁷ Great attention was paid to making KHAD employees loyal and dedicated communists. Addressing a PDPA (Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan) conference about the KHAD political indoctrination program, Najibullah said that KHAD's slogan was "a weapon in one hand, a book in the other."⁸

KHAD, however, was not immune from the bitter rivalry between the *Khalq* and *Parcham* factions. The *Parcham*-dominated KHAD occasionally passed information to the resistance about *Khalq* secret informers, to finger them for assassination. And *Khalq* faction KHAD members reciprocated.⁹

Within the Afghan government, KHAD had no intelligence service rivals. The national police force (*Sarendoy*) continued to exist under the Ministry of Interior. But its functions were limited to simple law-and-order duties as they applied to ordinary crime and city traffic control. The function of military intelligence was removed from control of the armed forces and given to KHAD. Sizing up KHAD, Dr. Sayd Majrooh, Director of the Peshawar-based Afghan Information Centre, said: "KHAD has its own police, prisons, and torture chambers. It is a state within a state."¹⁰

KHAD ACTIVITIES Modeled after the Soviet secret police KGB, KHAD was responsible for—

- Detecting and eradicating domestic political opposition.
- Subverting the armed resistance.
- Penetrating opposition groups abroad.
- Providing military intelligence to the armed forces, via its military wing.

KHAD's main function was to make sure the Afghan populace in DRA-controlled territory was properly subservient. Kabul province was said to be divided into 182 zones with as many as 100 KHAD informers per block. In schools and government offices, KHAD-staffed "Information Offices" were established to monitor the loyalty

of students and employees.¹¹ The result was a "pervasive atmosphere of mutual suspicion and fear."¹²

KHAD subversion of the resistance registered some scattered successes. The leaders of a few small bands were bought off, while others were betrayed by informers and destroyed by Soviet-DRA forces. In 1982 two Western newsmen traveling in northern and northwestern Afghanistan described the threat of KHAD infiltration of resistance groups as serious; in December 1982 John Fullerton of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* and *Daily Telegraph* found informers in the resistance in the Kandahar region. In late 1983 a West German correspondent commented that most of the resistance groups in Parwan province, just north of Kabul, had been subverted by KHAD.¹³

To undermine the resistance, KHAD tried both carrot-and-stick and divide-and-rule tactics. Working closely with the Ministry of Tribes and Nationalities, KHAD offered generous monetary payments, promises of no further bombings, return of confiscated property, and repair of damaged houses if tribes would submit. KHAD also tried to turn tribe against tribe; for example, in 1981 turning the Safi tribe against the Nuristanis and the Pushtuns of Wardak against the Hazaras.¹⁴

Another important KHAD function was to penetrate and subvert foreign-based opposition organizations. In Pakistan, KHAD agents were discovered among refugees; they also were suspected of infiltrating Afghan resistance organizations based in Peshawar. Violent incidents in Peshawar in February and March 1983 were attributed to KHAD. KHAD was believed also to have been behind some *Shiite-Sunni* religious conflicts in Pakistan's border areas, to have encouraged the *Baluch* separatist movement, and to have supported the militant Pakistani *Al-Zulfikar* group in its agitation against the Pakistan government.¹⁵

Taking a leaf from Soviet diplomatic practice, the Babrak government also initiated the practice of staffing its diplomatic establishments abroad with many secret police employees. A senior Afghan Foreign Ministry official who defected in late 1981 reported that during the last four months of that year, 10 of 15 Afghan diplomats appointed to posts in India, Iran, and Pakistan were KHAD operatives.

Their task was to watch exile groups opposed to the Kabul regime, and to conduct espionage.¹⁶

SOVIET INVOLVEMENT In 1983 the US State Department described the KGB role at KHAD as follows:

*KGB officers are assigned to every major department of KHAD, from the director's office down, and all major KHAD operations required Soviet approval before implementation.*¹⁷

According to reports, 57 to 312 Soviet KGB advisers were attached to KHAD's Kabul office.¹⁸

Differentiating between Soviet involvement in the police (*Sarendoy*) and the secret police (KHAD) is not always easy, although Soviet involvement was extensive in each agency. Police Colonel Ayub Assil, who left Afghanistan in 1982 after being legal adviser to the Ministry of Interior at the time of the 1978 Marxist coup, differentiated between the Marxist period 1978-79 and the Soviet occupation afterwards, 1980-82. Assil reported that after the 1978 Marxist coup, the 10 West German police advisers were sent home and replaced by 50 Soviet advisers. During this period, the Soviet advisers wielded influence, but the Afghan police officers enjoyed some autonomy. After the Soviet invasion, this autonomy disappeared. Moscow increased the number of advisers to the police to 200, and the Afghan officers were reduced simply to carrying out orders. According to Assil, torture was frequently used by the police of the Babrak government.¹⁹

Soviet involvement in the DRA's violations of human rights was evident soon after the 1978 coup and especially after the Soviet takeover in late 1979. A Kabul University professor, who was imprisoned and tortured in Kabul's *Pol-i-Charki* prison in 1978 and 1979, claimed to have seen Soviet advisers many times in the prison, including during torture sessions.²⁰ In February 1980, after the Soviet invasion, a French AFP (*Agence France Presse*; French Press Agency) correspondent who was able to visit *Pol-i-Charki* prison found it guarded outside and inside by Soviet soldiers.²¹

Later in 1980 eyewitness accounts testified to Soviets occasionally being present at interrogations of prisoners when torture was applied. One of these was an Afghan medical doctor who was incarcerated for six months until he escaped in September 1980. He

Prison de Pol-i-Charki

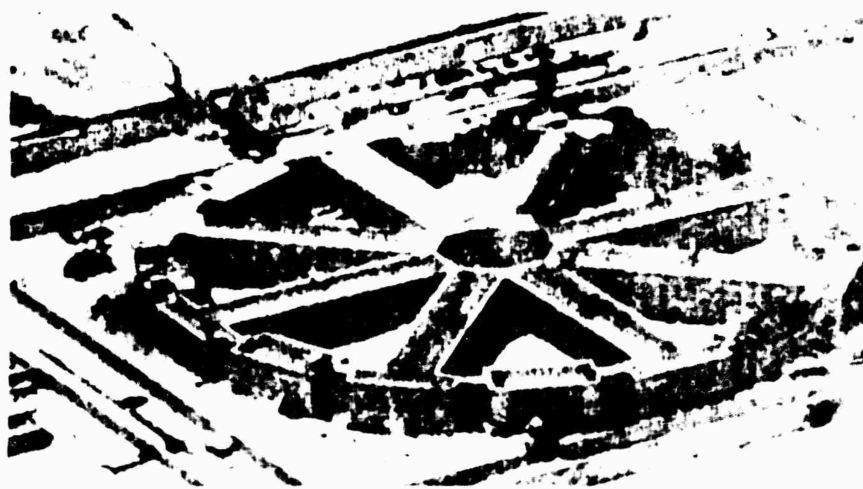


Photo: Gamma Liaison

POL-I-CHARKI PRISON—Kabul's dreaded political prison, where an estimated 20,000 victims have been executed since 1978.

reported that Soviets seemed to be in charge of the prison, of interrogations, and of executions.²² A year later, Farida Ahmadi, an Afghan woman university student who was tortured and imprisoned in Kabul for four months, May to September 1981, claimed she saw Soviets directly involved in torture, including removing the eyes of a captured resistance fighter.²³

In May 1982 a former prison officer reported that Soviet soldiers no longer were posted at the *Pol-i-Charki* prison, but that Soviet advisers still were there.²⁴ The US State Department, in its review of events in Afghanistan during 1983, charged that Soviet advisers often were present when torture was applied.²⁵

With Soviet assistance, the KHAD by 1983 had become a formidable force. Writing in that year, a British correspondent described it as "increasingly efficient—and dangerous."²⁶ Echoing this sentiment, the US State Department summed up the Afghan secret police as follows:

KHAD is the law in Kabul and other cities and towns controlled by the regime. . . . [It] has become an increasingly efficient

*agent of terror and repression and a prime tool for Soviet control of the Afghan population.*²⁷

AFGHANISTAN'S RECORD OF HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES

The deterioration of Afghanistan's record of human rights practices began immediately after the April 1978 coup. As evidence, two years earlier, Amnesty International had devoted only two paragraphs to Afghanistan in its annual human rights practices report. After the coup, the attention given Afghanistan by Amnesty International soared, reaching 23 paragraphs in its report covering the year April 1979-March 1980.²⁸

Reviewing the 20 months of leftist rule before the Soviet invasion, the US Department of State had said "torture, arbitrary arrest, extended and unexplained imprisonment, and execution became commonplace under the regimes of Presidents Taraki and Amin."²⁹ Describing the terror during the Amin era, Babrak Karmal claimed that "tens of thousands of . . . political prisoners have perished at Amin's hands and have been buried in ditches dug by tractors."³⁰

After the Soviet invasion in late December 1979, the new DRA government initially gave signs of better behavior with regard to human rights. In one of its first statements, on 1 January 1980, the new regime declared that its first item of business would be the release of "all political prisoners who had survived."³¹ In February 1980 the new regime told a visiting Amnesty International team that more than 15,000 prisoners had been freed. DRA officials also assured Amnesty International that "no political prisoners would be arrested for holding beliefs or for expressing opinions, provided that they had not been involved in violence."³²

These promises then were incorporated into law. The interim constitution—called the Basic Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and proclaimed on 21 April 1980—contained several laudable human rights provisions. Article 29 guaranteed the right to lead a secure life and the right to freedom of speech and thought. Article 30, no less important, proclaimed—

- The right of a defendant to be presumed innocent until found guilty.

- The right to have legal defense counsel.
- The prohibition of torture.

Article 56 promised that "judges are entitled to assess cases independently."³³

Two years later, in September 1982, the DRA promulgated a Law on the Implementation of Sentences in the Prisons, in which Article 3 reinforced the prohibition of torture. Officials engaging in torture were to be punished.³⁴ In January 1983 Afghanistan informed the UN of its accession to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in which Article 7 prohibited the application of torture.³⁵

Yet, in practice the Babrak regime ignored its own strictures and international commitments. The public posture of the government was in inverse relationship to its worsening practices. Immediately after it came to power, the Babrak regime had declared its intention to improve dramatically the government's behavior. On 5 January 1980 Foreign Minister Shah Mohammad Dost, in a statement at the UN, invited Amnesty International to visit Afghanistan. Amnesty International did so, sending a two-man team; but its searching questions and subsequent inquiries concerning missing persons and reports of ill-treatment of prisoners apparently were resented. By October 1980 the Babrak government was ignoring inquiries from Amnesty International; and in 1983 it was describing that organization as "notorious." By October 1983 Amnesty International was so concerned over the deteriorating human rights situation in Afghanistan that it issued a special 19-page "Background Briefing" paper on the country.³⁶

The other private international organization that closely followed human rights practices, the Switzerland-based International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), also was concerned. The ICRC sent an observer in response to an invitation by the Babrak regime in early 1980; but the envoy was compelled to leave Kabul in June 1980. Two years later, a four-person ICRC team was allowed to re-enter Afghanistan; but in two months, in October 1982, this team also was asked to leave.³⁷

To repeated appeals from international bodies for better human rights practices, including the UN Commission on Human Rights, the

Soviet-Babrak regime response was silence, or angry retorts about unwarranted interference into internal affairs.³⁸

The United States follows the human rights situation around the world most closely of all foreign governments. The Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs in the US Department of State annually publishes a volume called *Country Reports of Human Rights Practices*. Like the annual reports of Amnesty International, the US Government reports also reflected the deterioration in Afghanistan's human rights practices. Where the number of *Country Reports* pages devoted to Afghanistan for 1979 (already a bad human rights year) was five, the number rose to 10 for 1982.

The main charges of human rights violations against the Soviet-Babrak government were that it—

- Imprisoned persons for engaging in freedom of expression.
- Imprisoned persons without formal charge or proper trial.
- Ill treated and tortured prisoners.
- Carried out extrajudicial executions.

NUMBER OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND EXECUTIONS

Afghanistan always has had some political prisoners in modern times. During the last years of President Mohammad Daoud's rule, for example, the number probably stood at between 500 and 1,000.³⁹ These prisoners consisted of assorted opposition figures, almost none of whom were leftists. Some of the prisoners had been implicated in ex-Prime Minister Maiwandwal's alleged coup attempt; others were militant fundamentalist Moslem mullahs, some of whom had ties with the exile political organization of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in Peshawar. In addition, some were militant minority *Shiite* Moslems, as well as those persons arrested in connection with abortive uprisings in the Panjshir Valley and in the provinces of Badakhshan and Laghman.⁴⁰

After the April 1978 coup, President Taraki claimed that his government had released 12,223 prisoners being improperly held. But most of them were not political prisoners.⁴¹

1978 The 20 months of Taraki-Amin rule saw the jails filled again to record high totals. In October 1978 a visiting Amnesty

International team estimated that at least 4,000 political prisoners were being held in Kabul.⁴²

At the end of 1978, the US Department of State estimated the number as possibly being more than 10,000; this number included 200 members of the deposed royal family and other persons prominent in the previous Daoud government.⁴³

1979 During 1979, up to the Soviet invasion in December, the number of political prisoners rose to a record high of an estimated 12,000 to 15,000, despite the execution of between 5,000 and 6,000 prisoners.⁴⁴ President Taraki claimed on 10 March 1979 no more than 1,356 political prisoners.⁴⁵ But seven months later, on 16 November 1979, President Amin's government posted a list outside the Ministry of Interior of 12,000 persons reportedly executed by the Taraki government.⁴⁶

This figure may have been understated. The Babrak regime told Amnesty International in February 1980 that it had a list of 4,854 persons killed, but whose names had not been published. The regime also said that it had received inquiries about the fate of 9,000 persons who had disappeared in the Kabul area.⁴⁷

According to a French analysis, of some 8,400 believed executed, about 40 percent came from the Kabul area and the rest mostly from Paktia, Ghazni, and Nangarhar provinces. Some 85 percent of those executed were civil servants, teachers, army officers, engineers, doctors, and professors.⁴⁸

Since some of those arrested were held for only a few days or weeks before being released—and since the numbers of persons executed are not precise—an accurate estimate of the total number of persons arrested for political reasons or executed during the Taraki-Amin era is difficult to determine. The total of those arrested (for any period of time) during those 20 months may well have been as high as 45,000, and of those executed, about 17,000.⁴⁹

THE RECORD OF THE BABRAK REGIME In January 1980, after the Soviet intervention, the Babrak government announced the release of 6,146 prisoners, of whom some 2,000 were PDPA members (presumably of the *Parcham* faction).⁵⁰ A month later it told a visiting Amnesty International team that 15,084 prisoners had been freed.⁵¹

Subsequently, during the year Amnesty International calculated from official announcements that a further 4,231 persons, described by the DRA as "political prisoners" or "persons deceived by the enemy," had been released.⁵² Some of those persons released obviously had been arrested and detained in connection with anti-regime demonstrations and uprisings that broke out after the Soviet invasion.

The period with the minimum number of political prisoners following the Soviet intervention probably was January-March 1980. In February 1980 the DRA claimed to be holding only 42 or 91 political prisoners, depending on the official source.⁵³ Thereafter, the number of such prisoners started to climb. On 12 April 1980, 385 political prisoners were in *Pol-i-Charki* prison, according to a visiting ICRC delegation.⁵⁴ By the end of the year, the US Department of State said that the total was between 3,000 and 9,000.⁵⁵

THE RECORD DURING 1981-84

Over the next three years, from 1981 through 1983, the number of political prisoners continued to grow, although the number of summary executions was less than during the Taraki-Amin years. During 1981 the Babrak government announced the release of 1,772 political prisoners.⁵⁶ But at least that many filled their places. In June 1981 visiting Western newsmen were told that only 600 political prisoners were in *Pol-i-Charki* prison.⁵⁷ But at the end of the year, Amnesty International estimated that 3,000 to 4,000 prisoners were being held in Kabul, with others being held in 10 listed provincial towns.⁵⁸ The US State Department put the figures higher: it estimated that 6,000 to 8,000 political prisoners were in *Pol-i-Charki* prison at the end of 1981, with about 400 in Herat.⁵⁹

1982 Amnesty International did not attempt a numbers estimate for 1982, but declared that many were known to be held in three locations in Kabul and in 10 provincial towns. The US State Department gave for its end-of-1982 estimate between 20,000 and 25,000 inmates in *Pol-i-Charki* prison, of whom a substantial portion were political prisoners. Elsewhere in Kabul it estimated 500 prisoners were in various KHAD detention centers.⁶⁰

1983 For 1983, Amnesty International gave 12,000 as the number of political prisoners in *Pol-i-Charki* prison, including entire families with children.⁶¹

In October 1983 *Washington Post* correspondent William Branigin, during his trek in Afghanistan, met an Afghan army deserter who had served recently for a month as a guard at the prison. This deserter estimated that three of the prison's four cell blocks held political prisoners. The deserter claimed that during his month of duty in the prison he witnessed 19 executions.⁶²

Other witnesses corroborated that many executions were carried out there. A former prison officer stated in an interview in May 1982 that in his block alone, 10 to 12 prisoners were executed nightly. In March 1983 a former university professor, who was imprisoned in *Pol-i-Charki* prison for nine months, said that in his block 300 prisoners had been executed during his incarceration.⁶³

1984 Though the US Department of State declared "there is less direct evidence of (political) executions in 1984 than in past years,"⁶⁴ Amnesty International appeared to dispute this statement. Amnesty International said:

*Death sentences and executions have begun to be reported regularly in the official press only since April this year. In the latter part of 1984 there was a marked increase in officially announced death sentences and executions. In the month of September alone at least 42 executions were reported by the official media.*⁶⁵

Many of those arrested by the Babrak regime claimed that they had not been involved in politics at all, but had been arrested simply as a deterrent to others. Other prisoners apparently were arrested and tortured for having relatives living in the West or for possessing Western or "counter-revolutionary" literature. Frequently, persons were arrested on the basis of reports by KHAD informers or false and imaginary confessions extracted by force from prisoners.⁶⁶

TORTURE, ILL-TREATMENT, AND DISAPPEARANCES

While torture often was used by pre-1978 governments—and was widely practiced during the Taraki-Amin era—many Afghans hoped that the initial promises of the Babrak government to eschew such practices would be observed. Amnesty International was assured by the DRA Minister of Justice in February 1980 that the government considered the prohibition of torture to be absolute.⁶⁷ But it was not

to be. The US State Department's human rights report for 1980, after the first year of Soviet occupation, reported:

*Torture in prisons continues to be widely employed by Afghan authorities; evidence is furnished by surviving victims and other eyewitnesses. There are credible reports that Soviet advisers have been present during interrogation of prisoners where torture is alleged to have occurred. Other maltreatment is widespread, including beatings and sexual violations as well as incarcerations in jam-packed cells without heat, sanitary facilities, or adequate food.*⁶⁸

The US State Department's human rights reports for 1981 and 1982 were similar. In those reports, other forms of torture practiced by the Babrak regime were described—such as electric shocks to the genitals, nail pulling, hanging victims upside down for extended periods of time, and keeping prisoners in neck-deep water up to 10 hours at a time.⁶⁹

One of the most graphic accounts of torture came from the aforementioned Farida Ahmadi, a 22-year-old Afghan woman medical student imprisoned in 1981. A Western newsman related her story:

Every time she nodded off to sleep six prison matrons hit her over the head with iron bars and screamed into her ears. She said it was as if all the voices of the world were reverberating inside her brain. When she refused to confess she was taken to what she called the "chamber of horrors." She was led into a room with black drapes spotted with blood. Severed human arms and legs were scattered about the floor. She said she would have passed out if she hadn't been a fourth-year medical student and used to seeing amputations. Her tormentors were astonished that she showed no reaction.

One of Farida's cellmates went mad after one of the prison matrons used a severed leg to hit her over the head as if with a club. On another occasion she witnessed the interrogation of a young man by an Afghan communist party member. After scratching the man's eyes with some sort of instrument, he tore them out with his own fingers and placed the eyes on the table

in front of her. He said "if you do not confess, this is what we will do to you." Ahmadi did not confess.

But what was most bizarre, and what she found to be "one of the worst things," was that over the screams and groans of the torture chamber she was forced to listen to tapes of patriotic Russian songs.⁷⁰

In its special "Background Briefing" report of 11 October 1983 Amnesty International stated:

Amnesty International has received consistent reports of torture and ill-treatment of people taken into custody by the Afghan authorities and especially by the KHAD. Prisoners are alleged to have been subjected to beatings, deprivation of sleep, and electric shock torture.⁷¹

Torture was used by the Babrak government to extract confessions or information from detainees, and occasionally for punishment. Amnesty International declared that eight interrogation centers using torture were known to exist in Kabul.⁷²

Torture practices were not confined to the government. The US State Department reported "in the military conflict, torture appears to be used by all parties."⁷³ Amnesty International also went on record deploring the torture and mutilation practices of some guerrilla groups.⁷⁴

DISAPPEARANCES US State Department reports for 1980-83 indicate that disappearances also remained a problem. The following report for 1982 was typical:

Though not as frequent as during predecessor communist governments, disappearance of citizens under the current regime remains commonplace. Many who disappear are picked up by the KHAD but many others are caught in frequent sweeps to round up men for military service. . . . Relatives often do not know whether a person has been forcibly conscripted or taken by the KHAD and imprisoned for real or imagined crimes against the regime.⁷⁵

DENIAL OF FAIR PUBLIC TRIALS

Like its predecessor governments, the Babrak regime drew a de facto distinction between persons tried for political crimes and those accused of non-political offenses. The latter were treated under judicial codes laid down before the 1978 leftist coup. Defendants in the political category were subject to a 1981 law that stated that first priority under the new legal system was given to "safeguarding and protection of the gains of the Saur Revolution." One result was that defendants often were denied due judicial process. Another result was that they could be imprisoned without trial, or tried and sentenced in secret. When foreigners were accused of political crimes they were given a "defense lawyer." But they were not allowed to question regime witnesses, whose testimony invariably was accepted as fact by the court.⁷⁶ Amnesty International, in reviewing the DRA court system, concluded that:

*Most trials take place in camera and without the defendant being legally represented. In some cases, the defendant has not been informed of the charges against him prior to his appearance in court.*⁷⁷

The Babrak government often used show trials of Afghans and foreigners for propaganda purposes. American, British, French, and Pakistani prisoners were displayed on television mouthing confessions, which later turned out to have been fabricated and extracted under duress.⁷⁸

FREEDOMS OF EXPRESSION, ASSEMBLY, RELIGION, MOVEMENT, AND PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

Few of the Afghan governments prior to the Babrak regime had commendable records with respect to freedoms of expression, assembly, religion, movement, or participation in the political process. Even freedom of religion was circumscribed in pre-1978 years. Proselytizing by non-Muslims was prohibited; worship by Christians (mostly foreigners) and Jews (a tiny community) was permitted as long as it was unobtrusive. During the Daoud era (1973-78) political

assembly was allowed only in support of the government; and labor organizations were not permitted at all.⁷⁹

Still, the overall climate of freedoms was better from 1945 to 1978 than under the Marxist governments that followed the April 1978 coup.

FREEDOMS OF SPEECH AND PRESS No freedoms of speech and press existed in DRA-controlled areas. All media were strictly controlled. The press, radio, and television were used solely to convey DRA and Soviet views. No criticism of the regime or of the USSR was permitted. Since mid-1982 the unlicensed importation of foreign magazines, books, posters, video and audio tapes, or other publications was prohibited. The few non-diplomatic Westerners who visited Kabul often found their reading matter confiscated at the airport.⁸⁰

However, *Shabnamas* or night letters, usually in the form of handbills or posters, were circulated periodically in large cities. These posters were a traditional Afghan way of expressing political dissent. Clandestine radio stations also operated from time to time. (See "The Resistance Goes on the Airwaves," page 215.)

FREEDOMS OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATIONS Under the DRA regime, only demonstrations and large meetings that served the regime's purposes were allowed. In Kabul large demonstrations frequently were staged by the regime to give the impression of enthusiastic public support.⁸¹

As for freedom of associations, the DRA permitted only PDPA-controlled labor unions, and youth, women, and other organizations to operate. Even so, the PDPA-affiliated labor unions were denied the right to negotiate or strike. Informal commercial associations, however, did exist outside the formal labor union structure. These associations notably were organizations of private bus and taxi-jEEP drivers who arranged service from many points in and about resistance-controlled territories to DRA-controlled areas.⁸²

FREEDOM OF RELIGION Freedom of religion was a sensitive issue with the Marxist Babrak regime, which went to great lengths to assure the Afghan public that it was not anti-Islam. Money was given to mosques, pro-regime mullahs were given salaries, and more than 4,000 Afghans were allowed to make the annual *Haj*

pilgrimage to Mecca (with restricted passports). This freedom did not prevent one-third of those who went on the 1982 pilgrimage from defecting once they got out of Afghanistan.⁸³

Although the regime's policies always were immediately endorsed by a controlled council of religious figures, the vast majority of the country's Islamic leaders considered the regime an affront to the tenets of Islam.⁸⁴

Regime-salaried clerics often were viewed with contempt and sometimes were assassinated by the *mujahidin*. An Italian communist correspondent writing from Kabul at the beginning of 1984 stated "Islam is still the major obstacle that Karmal and his men have to surmount."⁸⁵

FREEDOM OF TRAVEL Because of the insurgency, moving about Afghanistan was difficult, often hazardous, but not impossible. Private bus and jeep-taxi services existed for travelers passing from insurgent-controlled to DRA-controlled areas. Arrangements had to be made to pay transit "fees" to all parties enroute, including at times to Soviet soldiers. In 1983 travel time between Bamian, in the center of the country, and Pakistan was 15 hours.⁸⁶ In normal times it was nine hours. Babrak government and Soviet officials usually traveled by air when they had to make a trip within the country or abroad. Overland travel was avoided where possible because it was too dangerous.

The DRA regime virtually stopped all official travel abroad by Afghans to countries outside the Soviet bloc, with exception of the *Haj* pilgrimage. A few businessmen going to Pakistan or India still could obtain one-trip passports, but other Afghans had to pay bribes of more than \$1,000 for a passport. When Afghans returned from abroad, their passports usually were confiscated at Kabul airport.⁸⁷

Legal emigration virtually was impossible; but an estimated four million Afghans had fled the country by the end of 1983. Most of them sought asylum in Pakistan and Iran.

FREEDOM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS In DRA-controlled areas, political participation and professional advancement were dependent on being a PDPA member, and often on adhering to the *Parcham* faction of the party.⁸⁸ Since the 1978 coup,

no general or local elections have been held. The regime ruled by edict.

In the 85 percent of the countryside controlled most of the time by the resistance, the political system depended on the ruling local group in the area. Typically, the local guerrilla group had an official ad hoc ruling council that organized local support and might administer justice, collect some taxes, and, in some cases, operate schools.

IN THE EARLY WEEKS OF THE BABRAK GOVERNMENT, Afghans harbored some hope that it would be less oppressive than its two predecessor PDPA governments. Most political prisoners were released. Babrak promised that persons would not be arrested for holding contrary political beliefs, provided they had not been involved in violence, and that the prohibition against government use of torture was "absolute." Yet within three months these promises were broken. The jails began filling again with political prisoners, and reports of torture became commonplace. By the end of 1983 Amnesty International estimated that the Babrak regime held 12,000 political prisoners in Kabul alone, and it identified eight interrogation centers applying torture.

The Soviets played the controlling and leading role in these denials of human rights. Afghans who experienced incarcerations in Kabul's political prisons, and Afghan secret police and other government agency defectors, testified to Soviets—presumably KGB operatives—being involved in important roles, including torture sessions.

Nowhere in the DRA government was the Soviet presence more pervasive than in the Afghan secret police, KHAD. Though a Politburo member, Dr. Najibullah, headed the organization, the KHAD was de facto controlled and run by the many KGB advisers attached to it. The KHAD's functions were ubiquitous, focusing particularly on dissidents and on subverting the armed resistance.

Though the KHAD was copied after the Soviet KGB, it had one function not done by the KGB in the USSR—military intelligence. The main argument for assigning this function to the KHAD probably was that the armed resistance was seen as a domestic political opposition movement, best dealt with by Soviet advisers most experienced in controlling dissidence. Other considerations may have been to

simplify Soviet control over all intelligence activities, and also to prevent the development of rival centers of power in the DRA. Factionalism within the PDPA gave enough headaches to the USSR without rivalry between intelligence operations.

Under Soviet direction, the KHAD became the most efficient and certainly the most feared of all DRA government agencies. Some guerrilla forces considered it more dangerous than the Soviet military. By use of bribery and other means of subversion, the KHAD succeeded in destroying a number of guerrilla bands and temporarily managed to pacify parts of several provinces.

Yet despite enormous Soviet expenditure to build up the KHAD, and ruthless political repression of suspected dissidents and insurgents, the Afghans were not cowed. The *mujahidin* had their own informers in the KHAD; these informers often alerted guerrilla bands about operations planned against them, and even about KHAD spies planted with them. The Soviets had not yet won the struggle.

Soviet Control and Indoctrination

The glorious Saur Revolution was in effect the continuation of the [Soviet] Great October Revolution.

Kabul New Times
8 November 1980

BY THE END OF 1984, SOVIET CONTROL AND INFLUENCE had permeated most aspects of life in those parts of Afghanistan where the Babrak regime governed. Although this process began with the April 1978 Marxist revolution, it greatly intensified after the December 1979 Soviet invasion. The distinction between the two Marxist periods has been aptly described by an American scholar as follows: during Taraki-Amin rule, the Soviets advised and the Afghans decided; after the Soviet occupation, the Afghans advised and the Soviets decided.¹

The Soviets' probable basic objective—based on empirical evidence of the first five years of occupation—was to lock Afghanistan firmly into the Soviet orbit while maintaining the fiction that the DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) was an independent, nonaligned government. Moscow was adhering to the Brezhnev Doctrine—to preserve in Kabul a pro-Soviet, Marxist-dominated government. In July 1980 a *London Telegraph* correspondent in Kabul reported that a Soviet officer told him that "Afghanistan will be treated like Mongolia. We are not going to leave this place." In December 1982, a *Pravda* article described the revolutionary process in Afghanistan as "irreversible."²

To retreat from the Brezhnev Doctrine would risk undermining the ruling communist parties in Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe. In Soviet eyes, a retreat also would cast doubt on the credibility of Soviet power in the world community. Soviet policy toward Afghanistan had the following three dimensions:

- **Militarily**, it sought to defeat the resistance, protect Soviet lines of supply, and consolidate Soviet-DRA control over the country.
- **Politically**, it sought to strengthen the authority of the ruling Marxist party, the PDPA, and through that compliant party establish pro-Soviet rule throughout Afghanistan.
- **Diplomatically**, the Soviets sought international recognition of the puppet regime while holding out the prospect of a negotiated withdrawal of their forces. The Soviets probably believed that with the passing of time the international community would forget the Afghan crisis and accept Soviet suzerainty.⁴

THE MEANS OF SOVIET CONTROL

In none of the six foreign countries where Soviet troops were stationed was Soviet dominance over the local government so pervasive as in Afghanistan. Soviet advisers were located in every ministry and attached to every important Afghan official. From the Prime Minister's office down to DRA army units in the field, Soviet advisers had to approve important decisions—and they often took the initiative.

Soviet dominance was no better illustrated than by comparing Soviet army troop strength to DRA army strength. By the end of 1984, at least 115,000 Soviet troops were in Afghanistan, compared to an unreliable DRA army of less than 40 percent that size. The preponderance of Soviet troops ensured Soviet control. The spiderweb of Soviet civilian and military advisers, numbering at least 10,000, saw that Soviet policies were implemented.

Soviet control, exercised in complicated ways, was directed partly from Moscow and partly from within Afghanistan. Its essential features were intimidation, subversion, and pacification of the Afghan population. The administrative "annexation" of a part of Afghanistan, the Wakhan Corridor in northeast Badakhshan province,

further entrenched the Soviet position. And by a variety of economic measures, taken in part to keep the puppet regime from collapsing, the Afghan economy became tightly linked to and dependent on the Soviet Union.

HOW AND WHO AMONG THE SOVIETS CONTROLLED AFGHANISTAN

To maintain the fiction that Afghanistan was an independent nation, the Soviets were careful not to disclose publicly how they directed affairs in their virtual colony. Soviet advisers directed Afghan government policies, but none was given a title other than adviser.

Then how was Soviet control managed and channeled? Obviously, ultimate control was exercised by Moscow, with the Soviet leader and Politburo approving major policies. Any significant change in policy, such as an increase in Soviet troop presence, likely would be a decision the Soviet Premier would approve. During the five years under consideration here (1980-84) three Soviet leaders held power: Leonid I. Brezhnev (from before the December 1979 invasion to his death on 10 November 1982); Yuri Andropov (1982-9 February 1984); and Konstantin U. Chernenko (February 1984-10 March 1985). Though some foreign observers hoped that the accession of Andropov and Chernenko would lead to a Soviet decision to withdraw from Afghanistan, no liberalization or lessening of Soviet control occurred.

Two persons in Moscow seemingly were charged with directing Soviet operations in Afghanistan: Boris N. Ponomarev, Politburo candidate member; and Soviet Army Marshal Sergei L. Sokolov, First Deputy Minister of Defense. The one individual most responsible for Afghanistan affairs appeared to be Ponomarev. He was a full-time Soviet Communist Party functionary, responsible for directing Soviet relations with non-ruling communist parties abroad. Holding no government post other than that of a deputy of the Supreme Soviet, he seemingly was responsible for implementing and coordinating the multi-pronged Soviet effort in Afghanistan. When Babrak Karmal visited or transited Moscow, Ponomarev always was present at the airport to meet him and see him off.¹

Marshal Sokolov was more visible than Ponomarev. From the very beginning, Sokolov appeared to be in charge of overseeing the Afghan military effort. He personally had directed the invasion in

December 1979 from a command post at Termez on the Soviet side of the Afghan border river Amu Darya. Thereafter, he visited Afghanistan about twice a year to review the pacification process.

Two other figures in the USSR also had some influence on the Soviets' Afghan policy during this period (1980-84). One figure was Vasily S. Safronchuk, a career Soviet diplomat with the rank of ambassador. An adviser to Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry from early 1979 until 1982, Safronchuk directed Afghanistan's foreign policy after the Soviet intervention. He then was transferred to Moscow to head the USSR Foreign Ministry's Middle East Division. There he appeared to play a major role in formulating and directing the Soviet position at the UN-sponsored Geneva discussions on a possible Afghanistan settlement.

The other important Soviet figure was a Dr. Pigam A. Azimov, President of the Academy of Sciences, at Tashkent. A frequent visitor to Kabul, at times as often as twice a month, his role was not clear. He may have been the Soviet Embassy's principal adviser on Central Asian ethnic and religious matters, such as treatment of minorities and policies for dealing with Islam.⁶

SOVIETS IN AFGHANISTAN The most important Soviet official in Afghanistan itself probably was the Soviet Ambassador, Fikrayat A. Tabayev, a non-career diplomat. However, some Western observers questioned this view. An economist by education, Tabayev was 51 at the time of his appointment to Kabul on 1 December 1979. Before that, he was a communist party functionary; his last position was Secretary of the Tatar Autonomous Region's communist party, a position that automatically made him a member of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. A Volga Tatar, Tabayev's name identifies him as an ethnic Moslem. In Moscow, he was considered an expert in Soviet-Moslem relations. He was chairman of the Soviet-Arab section of the USSR parliamentary group and chairman for solidarity with Asian-African countries. To have assigned Tabayev as Soviet Ambassador, Moscow must have considered him highly capable.⁷

Those who questioned Tabayev's primacy of influence pointed to the modest, self-effacing, nonassertive impression he gave to his diplomatic colleagues in Kabul. Skeptics also noted that he is a

Central Asian, an ethnic group that Moscow considered unreliable. Tabayev did not act like a Tsar.⁸

While Tabayev played the senior role in Afghanistan, a handful of other Soviets also was important. Identifying them or matching names with jobs, however, is not easy. The KGB chief for Afghanistan undoubtedly was one of the most important figures. While Western intelligence services had a shrewd idea who he was, they did not make public their surmises. Some diplomatic observers considered that the second- to fifth-ranking Soviets on the long Soviet diplomatic list were those most important in the Soviet Embassy—and encompassed the KGB chief. These names included the following in March 1982:⁹

- **No. 2:** Mr. Yuri K. Alexeev, Minister Counselor (career diplomat).
- **No. 3:** Mr. Vassily S. Safronchuk, Minister Counselor (career diplomat).
- **No. 4:** Mr. Valentin V. Rumiantsev, Trade Representative.
- **No. 5:** Mr. Vadim G. Pechenko, Counselor.

Another important official was the senior Soviet military commander in the country. His identity was a tightly kept Soviet secret, in keeping with the Soviet propaganda line that only a "limited contingent of Soviet troops" was serving in Afghanistan. If the Soviets revealed the commander's true rank, they indirectly would have admitted to the large number of troops under his command. As mentioned earlier, an analyst on the staff of Radio Liberty Research (Munich) believed the commanding Soviet officer to be General Mikhail Ivanovich Sorokin.¹⁰

Coordinating the Soviet effort in Afghanistan must have been a difficult task, because the operational jurisdictions of the Soviet military, the KGB, and the Soviet advisers overseeing the DRA civilian ministries probably overlapped. Clearly, the Soviet military directed the DRA army and air force, and the KGB ruled the DRA secret police, KHAD. Beyond that, the Soviet Foreign Ministry probably provided the policy and advisers for the DRA Foreign Ministry, while other Soviet ministries provided guidance and assistance to their counterpart DRA ministries.

IMPORTANCE AND UBIQUITY OF SOVIET ADVISERS

By 1983, Soviet advisers were entrenched in all DRA government agencies and in most military units in the field. No DRA army or air force base or important field post existed without its stiffening contingent of Soviet advisers, and in many cases Soviet troops as well. In most instances, advisers took the major initiatives and made the important decisions.

During the Taraki-Amin period, the number of Soviet civilian advisers rose from 600 to at least 1,500.¹¹ And the figure may have been as high as 3,700.¹² After the Soviet invasion a further influx occurred. By 1981 the total number of civilian advisers alone came to at least 3,850 (including some Eastern Europeans and Cubans).¹³ By the end of 1983, a conservative estimate would put the number at 5,000, but the figure may have reached 8,000. In total, Soviet civilian and military advisers probably numbered at least 10,000 and could have totaled more than 15,000.

President Babrak Karmal openly admitted to the importance of Soviet advisers. On 14 November 1980 he stated that the USSR had sent experts and advisers "in nearly all areas of the government machinery, for the ministers and the administration of Afghanistan." Then, in a remarkable admission of the Soviet role, he criticized those Afghan officials who "lay all the burden of responsibility for practical work on the shoulders of the (Soviet) advisers."¹⁴

Babrak's very life was beholden to the Soviets. His principal bodyguards, and his driver, chef, doctor, and six chief advisers, all were Soviets. At the palace where he resided and worked, the guard force was Soviet, except for a dozen Afghan sentries posted at the main gate for window dressing.¹⁵ Four government agencies closely controlled by the Soviets were the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Information and Culture, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A senior official in the Prime Minister's Office, who fled abroad in the fall of 1982, reported that all proposals for discussion by the Afghan Council of Ministers (what amounted to the Afghan Cabinet) had to be approved beforehand by the Soviet staff.¹⁶

The situation in the Ministry of Defense and the DRA army was even more blatant. According to Colonel Mohammad Ayyub

Osmani, an officer who had been employed at the Ministry in Kabul and who fled to Peshawar in early 1983, the Soviets completely controlled the ministry—to the point of countersigning all written orders. Even Afghans of general officer rank were searched when they entered the ministry building, where some 2,500 Soviets and 3,500 Afghans allegedly worked.¹⁷

The dominant role of the advisers extended to DRA army units in the field. In December 1983 a defecting senior Afghan officer from the 7th Army Division, Colonel Mohammad Rahim, reported that 50 Soviets were attached to his 2,000-man division. He said that, as in other DRA army units, the Soviets were the real commanders. Orders for the division to act always originated with the Soviet advisers, who often treated Afghan soldiers with contempt. "We were abused, ignored, and treated like servants or even slaves," Rahim said.¹⁸

A similar situation of dominant Soviet presence prevailed in the Ministry of Information and Culture. All press releases were produced or cleared by Soviet personnel. Soviets were assigned to the editorial staffs of all Afghan newspapers and to Kabul Radio and Television.¹⁹ Soviet soldiers were the principal guards at all key government offices, such as Kabul Radio and Television. A Kabul Radio official who defected in November 1983 reported that the agency's main building was guarded by a contingent of 25 Soviet soldiers. For the sake of appearances, they stayed inside the building during daylight hours, so that passing pedestrians saw only Afghans guarding the outside gates. At nightfall, the Soviet guards took over at the main gates. In late 1983, the defector said, the number of Soviet-manned tanks at the Kabul Radio building was increased from three to six.²⁰

The only ministry where a serious attempt was made to conceal the controlling Soviet presence was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, probably because of its visibility and dealings with foreigners. Even so, a Foreign Ministry official who defected in 1981 reported that after the invasion three Soviet advisers immediately were stationed in the Ministry: one who was responsible for overall Afghan foreign policy; a second who was responsible for economic aid and trade; and a third who dealt with legal matters.²¹ Before the invasion, just one Soviet adviser, the aforementioned Vasily Safronchuk, had an office in the building.

Even the shrinking UN agency staff was subject to purging and replacement by technical experts from countries mostly in the Soviet orbit. Within a year of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the number of Western-country UN experts dwindled from a total of about 60 to 3. When the contracts of Western UN experts came up for renewal, the DRA asked that they not be extended. Instead, they were replaced by UN-paid experts from the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria, with a sprinkling from India and Yugoslavia. For a time, in 1979-80, the UN resident representative was a Bulgarian. But his close ties with the Soviet Embassy became such an embarrassment to the international agency that he was replaced by an Austrian.²²

USE OF CENTRAL ASIANS Thirty percent of Soviet civilian advisers in Afghanistan were estimated to be Central Asians, most of whom were Tajiks.²³ They could speak *Dari* (Persian) and sometimes read and write it in the Arabic script.

However, the Soviet authorities did not consider the Moslem Central Asians reliable, so not a single Soviet Tajik was assigned to the KHAD or to the Ministry of Defense. As noted earlier, common Soviet soldiers of *Uzbek* origin were discriminated against in at least one Soviet military base. At the Soviet Embassy, Central Asians worked only in the commercial and consular departments, never in the political section. All translation work in the KHAD, the Ministry of Defense, and the political department of the Embassy was done by ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, or other "Europeans" who had learned the Afghan languages in Moscow or Leningrad.²⁴

INTIMIDATION, SUBVERSION, AND PACIFICATION

Three integral means of Soviet control were intimidation and subversion of the Afghan populace, and military action to crush the resistance (pacification). Intimidation was applied by repeated reminders to the Afghan public that Soviet support for the puppet government was "irreversible" and permanent, and by warnings to would-be opponents that unpleasantness would be their lot should they oppose the DRA regime or the Soviets.

Intimidation and subversion often were intertwined. Government employees, teachers, and workers in state-run enterprises were pressured to join the PDPA (Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan)

and attend party-sponsored meetings and classes in Marxism. Failure to do so meant being excluded from access to subsidized food and clothing, risking dismissal, or at least foregoing any prospect for advancement.²⁵ In the rebel-held countryside, villagers were warned that if *mujahidin* attacks occurred in their areas, their villages would be destroyed.

The tactic of intimidation had some successes. A Swedish correspondent traveling behind the lines in 1984 with the *mujahidin* reported:

*One of the problems which worries the commanders interviewed is that in many places the population's attitude to the guerrillas has changed. People who in the past willingly cooperated with the guerrillas have grown afraid of the Russian bombardments which occur when guerrillas are operating near their villages.*²⁶

A Swiss journalist traveling in northern Afghanistan in 1984 reported the same thing. While his guerrilla band was traversing a farm area in the Kaldar region of Balkh province near the Amu Darya border river, it encountered a hysterical armed farmer who asked the band not to enter his farm area for fear of Soviet reprisals. The farmer said:

*We don't want you to fight the communists. The Soviets are on the other side of the river. They will burn our harvests and destroy our homes.*²⁷

Tribes or villages willing to cooperate with the government were rewarded with benefits. An example of such a benefit was the December 1982 agreement with the Shinwari tribe in Nangarhar province; this tribe occupied the area straddling the Kabul-Peshawar highway just inside the Afghan side of the Pakistan border. Under the agreement, the DRA undertook to pay each of 1,000 tribesmen 3,000 Afghanis (\$40) a month to guard the important highway. The sum was twice the estimated average income of Shinwari wage earners. The agreement, however, was not completely successful. While the Shinwaris took money from the DRA, they also accepted bribes from *mujahidin* bands to allow them safe passage through Shinwari-controlled territory.²⁸ Other tribes receiving payments to establish pro-DRA militia members were the Jaji and Mangal tribes in Paktia province.²⁹

As for pacification of the countryside, the favorite counterinsurgency tactic was to conduct a military sweep through an area or up a valley to round up and destroy partisan bands. Also, hundreds of thousands of butterfly mines were dropped from the air in mountain passes used by the *mujahidin* or about villages thought to be supporting the resistance. This tactic was designed to discourage the resistance.

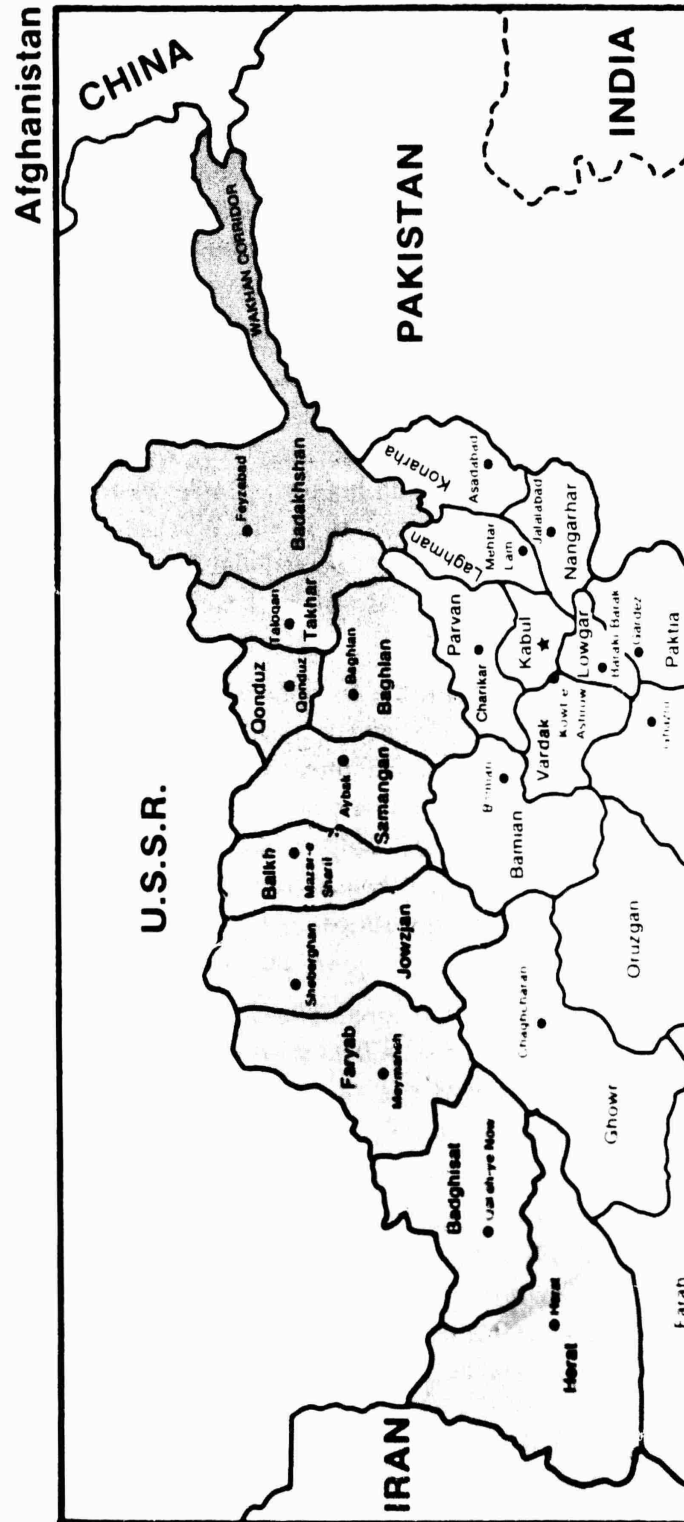
Another tactic, described earlier, was to bribe guerrilla bands to cooperate with the government. One of the most interesting of these attempts was an agreement negotiated with the celebrated guerrilla commander of the Panjshir Valley, Ahmed Shah Massoud. According to Western sources, he demanded and received a bribe of roughly \$350,000 in exchange for a truce beginning in February 1983. When the truce expired in February 1984, Massoud allegedly advanced three demands for a new truce: twice as much money, continued direct negotiations with the Soviets (instead of the Babrak government), and autonomous jurisdiction over the Panjshir Valley. The Soviets reportedly were willing to accept the first two demands, but not the third. Two months later, the Soviets launched their seventh offensive against the Panjshir Valley.³⁰

Another bribe objective was to turn guerrilla bands against each other. As mentioned earlier, a few bands did switch to the DRA side, to form what was called Pader Watan units. Also, the DRA claimed credit for some of the bloody infighting that sometimes occurred among rival bands in particular areas. An Italian communist correspondent visiting Kabul in January 1984 was told by the authorities that "many, perhaps dozens and dozens of informal agreements" have been reached between the DRA and rebel bands, under which some rebel bands did turn against other rebels.³¹

None of the policies noted above achieved the ultimate objective during this period. Although the Soviets could point to some successes, the end result fell far short of their hopes.

SOVIET "ANNEXATIONS" OF AFGHAN TERRITORY

Three instances of Soviet territorial annexations were reported during 1980-83. But only one was partially verified. This partially confirmed report concerned the administrative takeover of the Wakhan Corridor in northeastern Afghanistan.



Soviet "annexation" of Afghan territory

THE WAKHAN CORRIDOR One of the curious stories of the Soviet occupation was their administrative "annexation" of the 350-kilometer-long (217 miles), mountainous Wakhan Corridor. This claw-like (finger-shaped) territory, sparsely populated and largely treeless, lay mostly at an elevation between 3,000 and 5,000 meters (9,900 and 16,500 feet). Containing only eight hamlets or small towns, the Wakhan Corridor has been described as the "roof of the world."³²

For centuries, the corridor had been a no-man's-land of little interest to local khanates or invading armies. When the British offered it to Afghanistan's ruler, Abdur Rahman, as part of the 1895 Afghan-Russian border settlement, he at first objected. Rahman explained that he had enough problems with his own people without taking on responsibility for the Kirghiz bandits in the Wakhan Pamir mountains. In the end, he grudgingly accepted the territory; this action pleased the British, since it created a strip of buffer territory between Tsarist Russia and British India.³³

For almost half its length, the corridor is no more than 13 to 25 kilometers (8 to 16 miles) wide, and at its widest point 65 kilometers (40 miles). Before 1980 it was administered as part of Badakhshan province. Its main feature of international interest was the small herds of rare Marco Polo sheep found only in the Pamir mountains. The pre-1978 Afghan government allowed foreign big-game hunters to shoot these sheep in limited quantities. (An average of 20 heads per year was collected, at a fee of \$10,000 per head.)

The northern border of the corridor is shared with the USSR and the southern border with Pakistan. The short eastern end of the corridor forms a 60-kilometer-long (37 miles) boundary with the People's Republic of China; this is the only point in Afghanistan that borders China.

In May and June 1980 Soviet troops occupied the corridor; some time in the fall of 1980 the Soviets took over administration of the corridor. All Afghan officials withdrew. By then almost all of the 2,000 nomadic Kirghiz sheep herders at the corridor's eastern end had fled to Pakistan, leaving only small pockets of Afghans in the hamlets along the Amu Darya border river. Some of these Afghans reportedly were expelled by the Soviets. In any case, access to the corridor from the rest of Afghanistan was restricted to privileged

Afghans; and even then travel was limited to just the western half. The eastern half became an exclusive Soviet military area, with two reported Soviet military camps and some missile sites.³⁴

In the eastern section, the Soviets built an airfield and all-weather highways to at least two southern passes overlooking Pakistan, and to an eastern pass entering China. In the western portion of the corridor the Soviets completed an all-weather road running east-west, mostly along the southern (Afghan) bank of the Amu Darya river as far east as Lake Zorkul (Lake Victoria). From there, the road runs into the Soviet Union, where it joins the all-weather north-south road that runs into the closed eastern part of the corridor.³⁵

The Soviets never have admitted their presence in the corridor. The DRA also has been silent, except on an occasion when the Afghan Ambassador in Moscow issued a press statement denying that any Afghan territory in the Wakhan Corridor had been ceded to the Soviet Union.³⁶ Beijing claims that the Soviet "annexation" is part of Moscow's plan to "penetrate into Pakistan's northern border area (so as) to imperil the security of Pakistan."³⁷ This claim would help explain the all-weather road system and the military posts established in the corridor.

Another explanation for the "annexation" is that by occupying the corridor, the Soviets are able to control directly the 60-kilometer-long (37 miles) Afghan-Chinese border, including the only pass (Vakhjir Davan Pass, 5,000 meters [16,500 feet] high) that offers the only access from the Soviet Union into China for several hundred miles along the mountainous Soviet-China border. This pass could be strategically important, should the Soviets ever wish to sever the all-weather China-Pakistan Karakorum Highway several hundred miles to the east. Other observers doubt this theory, since the Vakhjir Davan Pass reportedly is traversable only on foot and by pack animals, and is closed by snow half the year.³⁸

The most plausible explanation for the Soviet takeover is that by occupying the Afghan-Chinese border and the Wakhan Corridor, the Soviets effectively deny to the Chinese a direct overland route into Afghanistan to supply arms to the *mujahidin*. Even so, the ruggedness of the terrain would seem to have precluded its use in this way. But one source alleges that at the time of the Soviet invasion, a

pro-Beijing Maoist partisan group of 700 persons operated in the corridor and was crushed in December 1979 only by the deployment of a Soviet army division. The insurgents, allegedly run by the *Shola-Javaid* leftist group, had received some material aid from Beijing.³⁹

An Indian leftist living in Moscow offered another explanation, in a British academic journal, for the Soviet occupation of Wakhan. It was to prevent Chinese plans to annex the northeastern part of Afghanistan, including the Wakhan Corridor and other parts of Badakhshan province.⁴⁰ This explanation seems unlikely, as the Chinese have never claimed any part of Afghan territory. But the Soviets may have concocted the idea as an excuse to pressure the DRA to allow them to take over administration of the corridor.

THE AFGHAN-SOVIET BOUNDARY AGREEMENT OF 16 JUNE 1981 Six to nine months after the Soviets occupied the Wakhan Corridor, the DRA and the USSR signed a boundary treaty covering the Wakhan Corridor. This treaty allegedly demarcated the 218-kilometer-long (135 miles) northeastern portion of the border between Lake Zorkul and the mountain, Povalo-Shveykovskogo (5,670 meters or 18,711 feet), where the USSR-China-Afghanistan borders meet. According to the brief DRA statement, the treaty "legally affirms the already existing and hitherto protected boundary between Afghanistan and the USSR in that area. Thus, it affirms the principle of the inviolability of borders between the DRA and the USSR." The Soviet statement was equally brief and in almost identical language.⁴¹

Since this particular border already had been demarcated with 12 border pillars, following the 1895 agreement, and has never been controversial, the question arises: why was a further agreement now necessary if it merely affirmed the existing boundary? Was it to lay to rest speculation that the Soviets had annexed the corridor? Neither the DRA nor the Soviets offered any explanation. No Afghan-Soviet boundary commission was known to have been established. Outside analysts speculated, however, that the so-called demarcation treaty really was a cover for a secret agreement legalizing Soviet administration of the corridor, especially the eastern half.

On 22 July 1981 Beijing denounced the border agreement as "illegal and void," claiming that more than 20,000 square kilometers of territory on the Soviet side of the demarcated boundary really belonged to China. In protesting the agreement, Beijing did not

question the adjacent, 60-kilometer-long (37 miles) Afghan-Chinese border that had been demarcated by an Afghan-Chinese treaty in November 1963. The Soviets responded by declaring the Chinese protest and territorial claim an "invention" and "heedless intervention."⁴²

ANOTHER BORDER AGREEMENT The Wakhan boundary treaty was not the only border agreement reached between the Soviets and the DRA. A 16 February 1982 agreement provided for adjustment of the courses of two small rivers that serve as borders for short distances between the two countries: four places on the Morghab River and one place on the Koshk River. Adjustment of the river courses was designed to reduce damage to the lands on either side. The estimated \$1.8 million cost of the project was to be split between the two governments. The project was to be finished by the end of 1982.⁴³

OTHER ALLEGED ANNEXATION ATTEMPTS In June 1981, the Paris-based Afghan Information and Documentation Centre received a report that a border area called Morichaq, which encompasses three rural villages in the district of Morghab in the bordering province of Badghis, had been taken over by the Soviets. The report alleged that Afghans were forbidden to enter the area, a piece of territory claimed by Tsarist Russia in the 1880s.⁴⁴ This report never has been verified, but the area concerned is remote.

In December 1981 a defecting senior KHAD official, Lieutenant General Saddiq Ghulam Miraki, claimed that the Soviets had tendered a proposal to Babrak Karmal to annex the eight northern Afghan provinces. Miraki claimed to have learned this from two well-placed *Khalq*-faction party colleagues. According to the story, Brezhnev proposed the idea to Babrak as part of an international settlement of the Afghan crisis: the northern provinces would become a new Soviet republic and provide a homeland for party activists, while the remainder of Afghanistan would be given independence as a buffer state. Miraki said that the plan, when prematurely leaked, was violently opposed at the March 1982 Party Conference, especially by *Khalq*-faction members.⁴⁵

This Miraki report received wide publicity in the Western media, prompting a formal denial by Babrak Karmal. At a press conference in Moscow, Babrak categorically denied that the late Soviet leader had wanted to annex part of Afghanistan. Babrak said:

*The Soviet Union has never even raised the question of incorporating independent Afghanistan into its territory. If some crazy person in Afghanistan were to ask for incorporation, the Soviet Union would reject such an absurd request."*⁴⁶

The report does smack of being a baseless rumor. Or more likely it was a distorted version of the Soviet takeover of the Wakhan Corridor.

INCREASING ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON THE USSR

Afghan economic ties with the Soviet Union, as pointed out earlier, had grown steadily closer since World War II. By the time of the 1978 Marxist coup, the USSR had become Afghanistan's largest aid donor, its principal trading partner, and the sole source of its military material. Most of Afghanistan's paved highways and airfields had been built with Soviet economic assistance, a development that greatly facilitated the Soviet invasion in December 1979.

After the invasion, economic ties with the Soviet Union became even closer and the dependence relationship even more pronounced. The Soviet Union's share of Afghanistan's foreign trade doubled, to account for more than 60 percent of Afghanistan's combined exports and imports. Although the DRA regime admitted that 80 percent of its economic aid came from the Soviet Union, the figure probably was closer to 90 percent. The Soviet Union gained some economic benefit from its embrace of Afghanistan—mostly in imports of Afghan natural gas—but overall, the occupation represented a net drain. The US State Department has estimated that the cost to the Soviet Union for its first four years of occupation of Afghanistan, 1980-83, was \$12 billion, and that the cost to it in 1984 was \$4 billion.⁴⁷

THE SOVIETIZATION OF AFGHANISTAN

In addition to direct measures that the Soviets took to control Afghanistan, such as assigning decisionmaking advisers to all ministries, other more subtle and indirect steps were taken to tie Afghanistan to the Soviet Union. The aim was to change the image of the USSR in the mind of the Afghan public and to mold Afghan institutions on the Soviet communist model. By sealing off Afghanistan's public from the non-communist world, and saturating this captive

audience with propaganda, the Soviets hoped to create a compliant, dependent state peopled with Afghans who would view the Soviet Union as a benevolent patron and allow it to direct Afghanistan's important policies.

Sovietization of Afghanistan was pursued through many policies. One policy was to mold governmental institutions and practices on the Soviet model. Other policies were to control and manipulate the media, restructure the Afghan educational system, expand use of the Russian language, and send children, college students, and officials to the USSR for training and indoctrination.

POLITICAL AND GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

The structures of the ruling political party (the PDPA) and the DRA government were modeled after the Soviet Union—but the Soviets had not introduced them. This restructuring had been implemented after the April 1978 Marxist coup. The PDPA had a Soviet-style Politburo, Secretariat, and Central Committee at the national level, and similar bodies in local cities. Supreme political power rested in the hands of the Politburo where, after 1979, the party's General Secretary, Babrak Karmal, wielded the most influence. The one difference between the PDPA and the Soviet Communist Party was that the PDPA deliberately avoided calling itself "communist." Instead, to conceal its Marxist character, it referred to itself as "national-democratic."

Similarly, the structure of the DRA government resembled the governmental structure in the Soviet Union. The DRA government included a Council of Ministers, a Presidium, and a rubber-stamp legislative body called the Revolutionary Council (like the USSR's Supreme Soviet). In addition to the party government (DRA) and the party (PDPA), a network of Soviet-style semi-governmental institutions existed, such as party-controlled labor unions and youth and women's organizations. The political institutional structure was quite similar to the Soviet model. And after the invasion, the Soviets naturally allowed this structure to continue.

DEPICTION OF THE SOVIET UNION AS THE MODEL STATE

Though the Taraki-Amin governments had been vociferous in public praise of the USSR, that adulation became even more

pronounced after the Soviet invasion. The Afghan public repeatedly was reminded of its indebtedness materially and ideologically to the USSR. President Babrak Karmal, in a speech on 18 August 1981, stated: "if the timely and fraternal aid of the Soviet Union had not been extended to us, nothing would be left today of Afghan independence."⁴⁸

The sycophantic DRA attitude clearly was illustrated in Babrak's warning to party activists and government officials: their individual performances would be assessed by how successful they had been in promoting Afghan-Soviet ties. Babrak said:

*The pursuance of eternal friendship and solidarity with the Leninist communist party of the USSR and of the friendship between our countries and peoples are the basic measures and scales to be used to appraise the work of every member of the party, from the highest to the lowest, and of government officials from the highest to the lowest.*⁴⁹

After the December 1979 Soviet invasion the Babrak regime moved quickly to adopt measures designed to flood Afghanistan with Soviet propaganda. In February 1980 it signed a protocol with the USSR to make joint films. A month later a direct link was established between the official Afghan news agency, *Bakhtar*, and the Soviet news agency *Tass*. In July 1980 a Soviet-built satellite ground station was opened in Kabul, enabling Kabul television to relay directly Soviet television programs. Beginning in August 1980 groups of Afghan propaganda workers were dispatched to the Soviet Union for orientation and training.⁵⁰

Celebrations commemorating various aspects of Soviet life became a feature of Kabul life. Afghan-Soviet Friendship Weeks were staged annually. Festivities regularly were held to commemorate such events as Lenin's birth and the Soviet October Revolution. Opening a Lenin Museum in Kabul in November 1980, Afghan Politburo Secretary Nur Ahmad Nur asserted that the PDPA Central Committee would do its utmost to "publicize and popularize the writings and thoughts of Lenin."⁵¹

Defecting Afghans reported that the hanging of three types of portraits was encouraged in DRA government offices, as follows: Lenin; the Soviet leader of the moment (for example, Chernenko); and Babrak Karmal. Other portraits were not allowed.

Two Afghan women employees of Kabul Radio and Television who fled Afghanistan in the spring of 1983 reported that the heavy propaganda emphasis on Soviet culture and values was "very dangerous" for Afghanistan, because the propaganda subverted the Afghan national character. The two defectors, who formerly ran the art and literature sections of Kabul Radio and TV, stated that they had been required to program many hours of Soviet-produced programs encompassing Soviet culture, poetry, sports, and politics, and Russian language instruction. The defectors concluded: "the Soviets would like future generations of Afghans to forget Afghan cultural values."⁵²

SOVIET MANIPULATION OF AFGHAN COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

Few ministries in the DRA experienced such tight Soviet direction as did the Ministry of Information and Culture. Not only were Soviets placed throughout the ministry itself, but also in the Ministry's adjunct bodies, notably the newspapers and Kabul Radio and Television. Every newspaper, as well as Kabul Radio and Television, had its supervising team of Soviet advisers.⁵³

As a result, the DRA view of the world was shaped almost exclusively by Soviets. Foreign news was supplied by *Tass* or, less often, by some other East European-bloc news agency. "Russian advisers directly control the production of news," reported the two earlier-mentioned Kabul Radio and TV defectors.⁵⁴

Soviet control extended even to Kabul Radio's religious programming, which consisted largely of sermons. A former producer of religious programs, who fled abroad in November 1983, reported that the sermons had to include appeals to the public to cooperate with the DRA regime, and to young men to perform their compulsory military service.⁵⁵

One of the Kabul Radio and TV defectors threw light on the common practice of Kabul Radio to stage interviews with "randomly picked" people from the city and countryside. These "interviewees" invariably would praise and staunchly support the regime. These testimonials were all staged, she said, by party activists or secret police employees who posed as workers or peasants.⁵⁶ To ensure that uninterrupted radio coverage blanketed all of Afghanistan, about 60

percent of Kabul Radio's broadcasts were beamed from transmitters in the Soviet Union, according to BBC monitors.⁵⁷

As part of the Soviet cultural offensive, Western books no longer were allowed in Kabul's bookstores, while Soviet publications were abundant and cheap. In DRA high schools, Soviet educational films were regularly featured, along with the teaching of Soviet history.⁵⁸

RESTRUCTURING AFGHANISTAN'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Before the April 1978 Marxist coup, no Marxist or Soviet material was taught in the Afghan school curriculum, although the school system contained many Afghan leftist teachers. The basic educational system consisted of 12 years of primary and secondary education, followed by four or more years of university-level education. Languages of instruction at the primary and secondary levels were *Dari* (Persian) or *Pushtu*, depending on the geographic area. Those provinces bordering Pakistan taught in *Pushtu*, while all others taught in *Dari*. The medium of instruction at Kabul University, Afghanistan's principal university, was *Dari*, since the capital city was predominantly *Dari*-speaking. The language of the much newer and smaller Nangarhar University outside Jalalabad, in Nangarhar province, was *Pushtu*. In both universities, English was widely used in instruction; in fact it was the medium of instruction at the Faculty of Engineering at Kabul University.

Two partial exceptions were permitted to the above language-medium system. In Kabul, French and German were widely used and taught in two prestigious primary-secondary schools. These schools were the Lycee Istiqlal and the Omani Schule, where French and German, respectively, were taught under French and West German government auspices. Graduates of these two schools usually spoke passable French or German but rarely were fluent in English. Babrak Karmal was a graduate of the Omani Schule. All other Afghan high schools taught English as a foreign language. A third educational institution, the Soviet-built and partly Soviet-staffed Polytechnic Institute in Kabul, had some Soviet instructors, but they taught through interpreters.

During the two decades prior to the 1978 coup, a major program of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in Afghanistan was curriculum improvement for Afghan primary and secondary schools. The main element of this program was rewriting and modernizing Afghan textbooks. Columbia University Teachers College played a big role in this textbook project. Under this program, leftist President Hafizullah Amin had twice studied at Columbia University.

THE TARAKI-AMIN PERIOD, 1978-79 Training and years of exposure in the United States, however, had not developed in Amin a predilection for a traditional Western approach to education. One of Amin's first acts after the April 1978 Marxist coup was to purge officials and teachers who had received training in North America or Western Europe. Then he revised the educational system along communist lines.

According to an Afghan Education Ministry official who defected in July 1981, the USAID-supported curriculum and textbook project was one of the first victims of the Marxists. By 1979 all Afghan textbooks prepared under the Columbia University project were removed from the schools and destroyed. The more than 3,000 books, many of them American, in the reference library of the Curriculum and Textbook Office of the Education Ministry also were carted away and presumably destroyed.⁵⁹

In place of these textbooks, hastily translated textbooks from the USSR school system were introduced. Twenty Soviet advisers were brought in to oversee the replacement program. Many of these advisers seemed to have little education expertise; so little, in fact, that they were suspected of being KGB operatives. Most of these advisers were Tajiks of Central Asian origin who spoke a dialect of Persian that generally could be understood by *Dari* speakers. The Soviet textbooks hastily translated into *Dari* and *Pushtu* were full of translation mistakes; these books also contained irrelevant examples and illustrations drawn from Soviet life.⁶⁰

The purging in 1978-79 of Western-trained teachers and educational experts was far reaching and often brutal. All of the 200 senior Education Ministry officials, including heads of departments and principals of teacher-training colleges, were dismissed. Many were imprisoned; and five or ten of the Afghans connected with the

Columbia University textbook project were executed. Party activists, mostly *Khalq*-faction members, were installed in their places; but few of these replacements were well educated.⁶¹

Along with the introduction of Soviet textbooks, the Marxists insisted that all teachers introduce pro-DRA propaganda into classroom instruction, even at the kindergarten and primary-school levels. A former elementary school teacher at Malalai School in Kabul reported that she had been compelled to teach student-worker-peasant solidarity in place of local Afghan history.⁶²

AFTER THE SOVIET INVASION The main change in education after the Soviet takeover in December 1979 was that Soviet officials in the Education Ministry gave *orders* rather than advice. Two other developments also occurred.

- The Soviets tried—with little success—to correct the many translation mistakes in the 1978-79 period, when Soviet textbooks first had been introduced.

- Secondly, many *Khalq*-faction executives were replaced by *Parcham*-faction activists or non-party opportunists. An estimated 80 percent of the *Khalq* executives were demoted. The Babrak regime simply did not trust them, though they were Marxists. Since few *Parchamis* had ever worked in the Ministry of Education, those *Parchamis* who were now elevated to senior positions were as a group even more poorly qualified than the *Khalqis* they replaced.⁶³

As a result of the widespread purge of non-party education officials, and later the demotion of *Khalqis*, the ministry did not have many qualified Afghan educators. In part because of this vacuum, Soviet advisers in the Education Ministry took over de facto management of the ministry.

In August 1980 the Minister formally announced that all teaching programs and textbooks would follow Soviet models.⁶⁴ Beginning in February 1981, the first four grades of all Afghan elementary schools in DRA-controlled areas had been transformed into the Soviet model; these schools now used exclusively Soviet-translated curricula and textbooks. Afghan teachers who fled the country said that these texts contained a heavy dose of Soviet propaganda, emphasizing Soviet communist slogans and Soviet history. By 1982 some 16 new textbooks had been introduced into the primary and secondary school systems; all of these books were virtual verbatim copies of Soviet

texts. The Education Minister described the texts as reflecting "the social developments of our society today."⁶⁵

To help ensure that the new educational system was taught with proper enthusiasm, teachers were warned in February 1981 to join the party or risk dismissal.⁶⁶

In 1982 the DRA announced that compulsory education was to be reduced from 12 to 10 years. The number of subjects taught would be reduced, but classroom hours were increased. These changes were in line with Soviet school practice. But critics of the regime also suspected that the changes were motivated by a desire to cut costs and to enable the regime to draft high school graduates earlier into the army.⁶⁷

THE AFGHAN PUBLIC'S REACTION The Afghan public's reaction to these radical changes in the educational system often was to boycott the schools or burn them down. In some primary schools in Kabul, attendance dropped to 10 percent of pre-1978 levels, despite a doubling of the city's population. Only 2,000 students attended Habibia High School, where 6,000 once had been the enrollment.⁶⁸

The resistance deliberately destroyed school buildings in many areas of the country and assassinated Marxist teachers. In fact, outside of Kabul most schools did not even function, because they were destroyed by the *mujahidin*. In April 1983 Prime Minister Keshtmand publicly admitted that 50 percent of the country's schools (of a total of 4,000) had been destroyed.⁶⁹

In June 1983, DRA Defense Minister Abdul Qader said that 2,000 schools had been "reduced to rubble."⁷⁰ According to the Polish press agency PAP (*Polska Agencja Prasowa*), of the 3,700 schools that existed before April 1978, only 860 still were running in 1984. And 130 of the schools still in operation were in Kabul.⁷¹

Some Afghan exiles claimed that to all intents, schooling in Afghanistan was offered only in Kabul city. In the 85 percent of the countryside controlled most of the time by the resistance, virtually no schooling existed. Even in the provincial towns "controlled" by DRA-Soviet forces, little schooling was carried on. An estimated half of Afghanistan's pre-1978 trained teachers had left the country; many others had been killed or had disappeared.⁷²

By 1984, options available to Afghans for education were bleak. For the 75 percent of the populace living in resistance-controlled areas, almost no educational facilities were available; for the remainder who lived in DRA-controlled areas, the only option available was a Soviet-type education.

DETERIORATION OF AFGHANISTAN'S UNIVERSITIES At the time of the Marxist coup in April 1978, Afghanistan boasted two principal institutions of higher learning, both state-owned: Kabul University, with 9,500 students and 1,027 faculty members; and Nangarhar University, outside Jalalabad, with 613 students and 57 faculty members.⁷³

After the coup, the country's limited higher-education system virtually collapsed. Enrollment at Kabul University plunged to a third of its pre-1978 level; 80 percent of the faculty members fled the country, were forcibly retired, or were executed. At the Faculty of Law, only four of 30 pre-1978 faculty members remained.⁷⁴

The smaller Nangarhar University abandoned its rural-setting campus because of guerrilla attacks; it was re-established, not in the nearby provincial capital of Jalalabad but in better-guarded Kabul. According to the official Socio-Economic Development Plan for 1983-84, Kabul University was targeted for an enrollment of 2,915 students and Nangarhar University for 520 students for that academic year.⁷⁵

A good picture of developments at Kabul University can be pieced together from the following reports of defecting staff and faculty members:

- By mid-1982, 84 Soviet advisers were on the campus and no important decision could be made without their approval.⁷⁶ By the fall of 1983, 30 percent of the teachers and administrative staff were Soviet.⁷⁷ The fleeing Afghan Vice President of Kabul University, Mohammad Anwar Sultan, stated in October 1983:

Everyone on the staff of Kabul University and other schools has a Soviet assistant with them, including the Vice Chancellor. There is no freedom for lecturers. Every day they must first take advice from the Russian assistant. ⁷⁸

- The appointment of every Afghan teaching staff member was cleared by none other than Prime Minister Keshtmand himself, after discussion of each case with the Soviets. The result was that party members, who usually had poor educational records, were picked in preference to better qualified non-party personnel.⁷⁹

- From 1980 to 1983, 80 to 90 percent of the student body consisted of women, since males mostly had joined the resistance, fled the country, or accepted scholarships to the Soviet Union.⁸⁰

Male students who volunteered for three months of military service at the front automatically were promoted to the next academic year level without examination. Beginning with the academic year 1983-84, students enrolled in Kabul University fell into one or more of three categories: women; PDPA party members; and males who had completed military service. Beginning with that academic year, too, the number of male students significantly increased, 753 males versus 1,030 females, although the total university student enrollment of 1,783 was well below the official target of 2,915.⁸¹

- High-school graduates who were party members did not have to sit for the university entrance examination; once enrolled, they were not required to attend classes. They often roamed about the campus intimidating other students and the faculty, and trying to pressure students to join the party.⁸²

- The atmosphere at the university was tense and oppressive. Said a former staff member: "the university has become an academician's nightmare; there is fear of military service, fear of the party members, and fear of being killed or summarily executed."⁸³ Faculty members teaching the humanities and social sciences, especially law, economics, and political subjects, were subject to intense surveillance. The entire campus was barricaded by barbed wire, and party guards checked persons entering or leaving.⁸⁴

- Political indoctrination was compulsory for all students. According to a professor who defected in the fall of 1983, five compulsory subjects were introduced: historical and dialectical materialism, scientific sociology, history of revolutionary movements, and Russian language. Other new elective courses were Soviet economic studies and the history of worker movements. The history of world literature, another new elective course, dealt only with Marxist poets and authors, including Lenin and Fidel Castro. Russian history was

given great emphasis in the teaching of history. A main theme was the Soviet Union's helpfulness toward Afghanistan, and the Western world's attempts to "colonize" Afghanistan.⁸⁵ These courses generally were taught by Soviet instructors, often through a Central Asian Soviet interpreter. According to a defector, the Soviet advisers often emphasized to Afghan teachers that their lectures need include only 20 percent of substance; 80 percent of the time could be used productively for political indoctrination.⁸⁶

- Of several university faculties or colleges closed, one was the USAID-established Faculty of Engineering. This closing meant that only the Soviet-established Kabul Polytechnic Institute (founded in 1967) remained to teach engineering subjects. Another badly affected school was the Faculty of Medicine, where the erosion of faculty was so great that students had to complete their medical studies in the Soviet Union.⁸⁷

- Field work no longer was possible. And laboratories for science students no longer functioned.⁸⁸

- Kabul University's budget was reduced from \$4.8 million (equivalent) in 1979 to \$3.8 million (equivalent) in 1982.⁸⁹

Formal or informal links that Kabul University formerly had with universities in Western Europe and North America were terminated. Lecturers from East Germany replaced the six professors supplied by West Germany's Bonn and Borchum Universities to the Faculty of Economics. These lecturers, however, were considered to be better qualified than Soviet instructors elsewhere at the university.⁹⁰

THE FATE OF A PROTESTING AFGHAN PROFESSOR In April 1982 a handful of Kabul University faculty members was arrested. The most prominent was Professor Hasan Kakar, 55, chairman of the History Department. Professor Kakar probably was the university's most respected Afghan scholar; he had studied in British and American universities and was the author of two acclaimed books.

The crime of Professor Kakar and his colleagues was to establish a human rights group inside the university to protest the arbitrary arrest of teachers and students. The group had begun to print and circulate pamphlets and posters appealing for the release of innocent people from Afghan prisons. For 15 months, Professor Kakar was

kept in solitary confinement. Pressure was applied to have him sign a "confession" that he had fanned opposition to the ruling party and had been a tool of imperialist and counterrevolutionary elements. Professor Kakar refused and, at his secret trial, apparently defended vigorously the right of Afghan citizens to hold views different from those of the ruling party. He probably would have been executed had he not been so well known internationally. As it was, he was sentenced to eight years in prison.⁹¹

Some of his colleagues who were arrested were badly tortured and broken physically; one of them, in fact, was blinded.

THE STATE OF OTHER HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS With the exception of the Kabul Polytechnic Institute, built and supported by the Soviet Union, all other institutions of higher education, besides Kabul University and Nangarhar University, either were not operating or were barely surviving. The account of one defecting college student is illustrative. This student, Hamed by name, gave the following account in 1982:⁹²

When we passed the entrance examination to Kabul University, only about 15 percent were admitted, all of them party activists or relatives of party members. The rest of us were told to go to provincial colleges. As we knew there were no such colleges in the provinces, the students tried with every kind of connection to stay in Kabul. I was one of a group who accepted to go to a college in Charikar, capital of Parwan province, because it was not far from Kabul (about 60 kilometers [37 miles] to the north). At Charikar, we were received by local government authorities and installed in a rather large building. In the evening we were gathered in the courtyard, our names registered, and Kalashnikov rifles distributed among us. When some of us protested, we were told that as the teaching staff and other facilities of the college were not ready, we had to learn something useful in the meantime. We were further told that even if the college opened, we would have to defend the fatherland during the night and study during the day. Then the authorities made the following proposal: if anyone accepted to serve in the army, he would receive one thousand Afghanis per month and the diploma of the college without studying or passing examinations.

The next day, desertions by the students began. Hamed reached Kabul three days after he had first arrived in Charikar. He later fled to Pakistan.

TEACHING AND USE OF RUSSIAN LANGUAGE ARE EXPANDED

In pre-1978 Afghanistan, knowledge and teaching of the Russian language were surprisingly limited, despite the fact that the USSR was a border state and the country's major trading partner. Except in the military, where Soviet equipment was used, and in a small unit of the Foreign Languages Department of Kabul University, Russian language instruction was not offered. Even in provinces next to the USSR, with cross-border trade and communication, Russian was not taught in local Afghan schools. The explanation given Westerners was that the government and most Afghans did not welcome Soviet cultural expansion or Soviet propaganda. These restrictions changed after 1978, particularly after the Soviet invasion.

After the invasion, English no longer was studied in Afghan secondary schools (although French and German continued to be taught in the Istiqlal and Omani schools in Kabul). In place of English, Russian language study was made compulsory in secondary schools and in all institutions of higher education. At Kabul University, a separate department for teaching the Russian language was established. This department was designed to facilitate the introduction of Russian as a medium of instruction at the university.⁹³

Up to 1983, however, knowledge of Russian among the students was so limited that Soviet lecturers were compelled to use interpreters in their classes. Use of Russian in the Afghan army expanded. According to a defecting brigadier general in 1982, the Soviets insisted that Afghan army officers always speak Russian—not *Dari* or *Pushtu*—in the presence of Soviet officers.⁹⁴

A Western diplomat in Kabul reported that in the Foreign Ministry the new Afghan Chief of Protocol spoke only his own language and Russian. His predecessors had been fluent in English or French and rarely knew Russian.⁹⁵

STUDY AND TRAINING ABROAD VIRTUALLY LIMITED TO THE USSR

The marked preference, after the 1978 Marxist coup, for sending Afghans to the USSR for training, rather than to non-Soviet-bloc countries, became almost total after the Soviet takeover in December 1979. A former UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) education expert who worked in Afghanistan until 1981 reported that after the Soviet intervention, no Afghans were permitted to attend UN-sponsored training courses or accept UN study fellowships in non-Soviet-bloc countries. These strictures applied even when the training was for periods as short as a month or two.⁹⁶

Statistics on the number of Afghans studying in the USSR are striking. In 1978, 1,505 Afghan students and officials were training in the Soviet Union, some of them sent there before the April 1978 coup.⁹⁷ In 1979 the figure jumped to 6,320⁹⁸ and thereafter it continued to climb. An August 1980 protocol provided for the enrollment of Afghan students at Soviet institutions of higher education and "almost 1,400" students were sent each year from 1980 through 1983.⁹⁹ By the end of 1981, an estimated 8,700 Afghans were studying in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.¹⁰⁰ In 1984 the DRA admitted to 7,500 university students in the USSR and that 500 had completed their studies there in that year.¹⁰¹

In 1982 the estimate of Afghans studying or training in the USSR was between 6,000 and 10,000¹⁰² and in 1983 the figure climbed to between 10,000 and 20,000.¹⁰³ By 1981 Afghans comprised the largest contingent of students from any developing country in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. They represented approximately 12 percent of the estimated 72,090 foreign students in Soviet-bloc universities and polytechnic institutes.¹⁰⁴

Accounts differ on the intellectual caliber of Afghan students sent to the Soviet Union. According to a former Afghan Education Ministry official, those receiving scholarships for study in the USSR before the 1978 coup generally were students with poor to mediocre academic records, originating in the lower social and economic classes. The Soviets seemed eager to accept, if not to prefer, such students, said the former education official.¹⁰⁵

The presumption of some Afghan educators was that this Soviet attitude was based on an expectation that such students were less likely to question Soviet totalitarianism and would be more amenable to subversion or recruitment into the PDPA. A respected British scholar said that this Soviet attitude of deliberately seeking intellectual mediocrity continued after the Soviet intervention, at least among young Afghan military cadets selected for USSR officer training courses.¹⁰⁶

On the other hand, a Pakistan newspaper claimed that the best students at Kabul University were siphoned off to the Soviet Union to continue their studies after the first year.¹⁰⁷

The Soviets had many reasons for sending so many Afghans to the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. But the main reason was to train an ideologically committed pro-Soviet Afghan elite who eventually would rule Afghanistan. Said a high-school student who joined the guerrillas: "they promised us we could be anything—airline pilots, doctors, scientists."¹⁰⁸ Another reason was that the fleeing abroad of so many Afghan professors made it difficult to train Afghans at home. Male Afghans had another reason to go—they could avoid compulsory military conscription by attending school in the USSR.¹⁰⁹

Students were not the only Afghans sent to the USSR and Eastern Europe. Many government and party officials were sent for short training courses; one estimate put this number at 15,000 for 1980 and 1981. Although many Afghan army and air force personnel also were sent to the USSR, few statistics on them have been revealed. A knowledgeable French publication, claiming a good resistance source, reported that 8,820 Afghan military and police officers had received training in the Soviet bloc between July 1980 and December 1984.¹¹⁰

Even small children were dispatched for indoctrination. In 1982, 1,200 Afghan children attended summer camp sessions in the USSR. Most of these children were 10 to 12 years old and some were as young as six. Parents later complained that their children had been subjected to political indoctrination courses and had been pressured to serve as informers after their return to Kabul.¹¹¹

In November 1984, some 870 children between seven and nine years of age were sent to the USSR for 10 years of schooling; they were the first of an expected annual batch of such children.

Other children, as young as 10 and numbering in the hundreds, were sent to the USSR to be trained as spies and infiltrators in the resistance, especially guerrilla groups.¹¹²

LIFE AT SOVIET HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS Some Afghan emigres feared that exposure to the USSR's higher economic living standards would turn Afghan students into pro-Soviet activists. But the reality seemed to be different. Far from being impressed by the higher standard of living, many Afghan students disliked the Soviet quality of life. Afghans complained of living in crowded and confined quarters. A male student who studied in Moscow stated that the Soviet Union was very different from the picture painted to him by Soviet lecturers at the Polytechnic Institute in Kabul. He gave the following as an example:

*We were afraid to go out at night because so many of the foreign students studying in Moscow had their boots, jackets, and even their trousers stolen by people anxious to get hold of good-quality foreign clothes.*¹¹³

In addition, many Afghan students encountered hostility from Soviet citizens who resented Afghans studying in their country, while Soviets were dying at the hands of Afghans in Afghanistan.¹¹⁴ Another former Afghan student in the Soviet Union stated:

*In Rostov where I was studying, we were not allowed to leave the hostel. In the city we were very badly received by the local population, we were threatened, insulted and even beaten.*¹¹⁵

An 18-year-old Afghan girl student who returned from Moscow and then defected in 1982 with her parents to Pakistan related:

*The Soviet people have absolutely no idea what is happening in Afghanistan. . . . Afghans are generally hated in the Soviet Union. When we were asked from which country we came, we would name Iran, or an Arab or Latin American country.*¹¹⁶

That life often was not pleasant for Afghan students in the USSR was further depicted by the aforementioned former student:

When (our group of Afghan students) entered the Soviet Union, they had brought with them small transistor radios, but the authorities took them away and gave the students instead small radios with a single channel.

The non-party students had a hard time. At the university hostel, non-party students had to share rooms with party activists. They were not allowed to go alone into the city; they had to go with a party activist or get his permission. They were forbidden relations with other foreign students.

There were constant compulsory meetings, where long speeches were delivered, cassettes of Babrak Karmal speeches played, whose contents were commented upon and explained. If a student failed to attend a meeting, he was threatened with punishment in Kabul.

Students from other countries were allowed to go home any time they wished, but the Afghan students needed re-entry visas and these were not easy to obtain.

During holiday periods, the Afghan students kept to their hostels or were sent to Central Asian republics. For those kept in their hostels, visiting by Afghan students in one block with Afghans in another block was not allowed. Sometimes the male students were used as workers in construction projects; and the girls sent to collective farms to pick potatoes. The girl said: "We were like prisoners in the hands of our Khalqis and Parchamis."

The girl also reported that many of the non-party students got fed up, boycotted the compulsory meetings and tore down Karmal portraits. Because they did these things as a group, no punishment was meted out to them.¹¹⁷

AFTERMATH OF REFORMS OF THE SAUR REVOLUTION

During the first five years of Soviet occupation (1980-84), the Afghan government initiated no new radical socialist reform

programs. Rather, cognizant of widespread hostility to the reforms introduced during the Taraki-Amin era, it chose to slow down the implementation of these earlier reforms. These reforms largely had consisted of the following: agrarian land reform; elimination of agrarian indebtedness; rapid eradication of illiteracy; enhancement of women's rights; and cultural promotion of Afghanistan's ethnic minorities. The land reform program was by far the most significant.

AGRARIAN REFORM SLOWS

The land reform program, launched 1 January 1979, limited the amount of agricultural land that a single family could own, depending on the quality of the land; holdings above the limits were confiscated without compensation. In adopting this measure in a predominantly agricultural society, the DRA had assumed that it would rally the majority of the countryside population to its support. It also expected that the measure would destroy the political power of the rural gentry and that agricultural production would increase. By mid-1979, when the land reform program was hastily declared complete, the Taraki government boasted that nearly 500,000 peasant families had received land and that 665,000 hectares (1,632,500 acres) of land had been redistributed. Only 40,000 families, or 4 percent of the population, were said to have been adversely affected by the redistribution.¹¹⁸

Contrary to expectations of the Taraki government, the land reform program neither was popular nor productive. Because it did not provide for compensation, and was not carried out in a systematic or particularly equitable way, most of the rural population viewed it as contrary to Islamic ethical precepts. Moreover, some agricultural experts considered fragmentation of existing holdings as a more serious problem than large estates prior to the land reform. As it was, the land program disrupted the often mutually beneficial relationship between large landlords and tenants. The large landlords supplied credit and marketed the farm output, while allowing the peasants a sustaining if not affluent income.

Agricultural production plummeted in 1979 because of the land reform program. According to a Soviet source, cropland was reduced nearly 9 percent, and grain production dropped 10 percent. National per capita income fell by nearly 14 percent.¹¹⁹ When the Taraki government realized that the land reform program was only fueling

resistance to the government, it announced that the program had been completed, a bare six months after it was initiated.

The Babrak government did not repudiate the land reform program, but slowed its implementation and changed its form somewhat. Changes emphasized the creation of Soviet-style cooperatives to provide rural credit and marketing of agricultural output, and an expansion in the number of state farms.¹²⁰ Little progress occurred on any of these fronts, from redistribution to the creation of more state farms, since most of the countryside was in the hands of the resistance.

In 1983 and 1984, the DRA government issued statistics that were contradictory, and also at variance with earlier claims of accomplishment. In May 1983 the government claimed that 350,000 peasant families had received plots under the redistribution scheme.¹²¹ But in December 1984 the government announced a smaller figure, 308,210 families.¹²² The claimed figures of new titles to land confused matters further. In September 1983 the government boasted that 80,651 titles of ownership had been issued since the April 1978 revolution.¹²³ But in December 1984 this figure was given as 29,893.¹²⁴

As for the total amount of land redistributed, in December 1984 the government claimed it was 679,567 hectares (1,698,917.5 acres).¹²⁵ Since President Taraki claimed in 1979 that his administration had redistributed 600,000 hectares (1,500,000 acres), a figure most analysts doubted, the 1984 figure represented only a 13 percent growth on paper. In any case, most Western analysts scoffed at these agrarian reform statistics as being totally unreliable.

The real state of affairs was impossible to ascertain. In farm areas adjacent to Kabul, and in a few other areas where the DRA more or less exercised control, some land redistribution undoubtedly occurred. However, it must have been little. In most parts of the country, land reform existed on paper only. In 1980 an Afghan refugee from Kandahar reported widespread hostility to the program. For example, buyers of raisins, an important export crop, refused to purchase the output of vineyards belonging to a beneficiary of the land redistribution program. This refusal was based on the feeling that raisins from those vineyards were stolen goods.¹²⁶

ERADICATING RURAL INDEBTEDNESS AND ENHANCING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

With most of the countryside in insurgent hands, neither of two other major reform programs—eradicating rural indebtedness and enhancing women's rights—had much practical impact. In insurgent-controlled areas, farmers tried to make their own credit arrangements with friends, neighbors, or the remaining gentry. In areas under DRA control, some credit cooperatives were set up, at least on paper; but no public information was available on their impact.

The DRA's measures for abolishing dowries and forbidding forced marriages had pleased many educated Afghans. But these moves alienated much of the population, who viewed such programs as attacks on the family, traditional Afghan culture, and on Islam. Outside of Kabul, these programs had little effect. Growing impoverishment of the rural population and the flight of millions to Pakistan, in any case, made the programs of little consequence.

ELIMINATING ILLITERACY

At the time of the 1978 Marxist coup, the Daoud government was carrying out a UNESCO-aided program to eliminate illiteracy in 20 years. After the coup, the Marxists changed this program radically. The time period was reduced to four years—an unrealistic period, considering the lack of teachers and an appropriate bureaucratic infrastructure. After the Soviet invasion, Soviet advisers disregarded UNESCO's recommendation that the time period be lengthened to at least 10 years; the Soviets set the target at seven years for men and an open-ended time frame for women.¹²⁷

Where the UNESCO experts had urged an anti-illiteracy program that emphasized family life, Islamic precepts, and first aid, the Taraki-Amin regimes considered this program "rubbish." Instead, the regime insisted that illiteracy material contain political matter, lauding the ruling party and the leftist revolution. The Babrak government reduced slightly the heavy political content. And the Soviets insisted that only methods and curriculum used in the USSR to eradicate illiteracy be applied to Afghanistan.¹²⁸

The DRA government published a few statistics on progress made under the illiteracy program. In 1980 it claimed that 59,951 persons had been enrolled in literacy courses, 57 percent of whom

were from Kabul. Of the 5,745 women who had taken literacy courses during that year, all but 835 lived in Kabul.¹²⁹ In May 1983 Babrak claimed that 650,000 persons were learning how to read and write.¹³⁰ But again, most of these persons probably were in Kabul.

PROMOTING AFGHANISTAN'S MINORITIES

Prior to the 1978 coup, the Afghan government had a de facto policy of favoring the 50 percent of the population who were Pushtuns. Despite laws against nepotism, such factors as ethnic, tribal, and family connections were important in gaining government positions and in promotions. In this environment, Pushtuns held a disproportionately high number of top positions in civilian ministries and military establishments.¹³¹

The pre-1978 governments had displayed a tolerant, if not condescending, attitude toward non-Pushtuns. Though no clear national ethnic policy existed, the government in fact deemphasized the presence of minority groups. It espoused such general goals as—

- Eliminating tribal localism.
- Promoting national integration.
- Developing a Kabul-centered bureaucratic authority to replace tribal rule.
- Promoting economic development in non-Pushtun areas.¹³²

Before 1978, Afghans had only two official languages: *Pushtu* and *Dari* (Persian). *Dari* was dominant in Kabul and was used widely about the country for commercial, administrative, and everyday business. No official publications or radio broadcasts were issued in other Afghan languages.

While much of the population was bilingual, about 15 percent of the population had as its mother tongue a language other than *Dari* or *Pushtu*. Prominent among these were Turkic languages, mainly *Uzbek*. However, no newspapers, magazines, or radio or television broadcasts used these languages.¹³³

SOVIET CULTURAL AFFINITIES The Soviet-Afghan border split certain ethnic communities that shared the same ancient culture and spoke the same common language—in particular the Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Turkomans. This ethnic affinity gave the Soviets a certain advantage in their cultural relations. But the advantage was not as great as

it might have been if the Soviet Union had not been such a repressive government.

The Soviets long had used Central Asians as part of their diplomatic and economic aid missions in Afghanistan. The Soviet Ambassador during the first five years of Soviet occupation, Fikrayat Tabayev, was a Tatar, a Central Asian. Soviet personnel assigned to Afghanistan always were instructed to stress to Afghans the ethnic and cultural ties existing between ethnic groups living on each side of the border.

For years before the December 1979 invasion, the Soviets beamed *Uzbek*-language broadcasts from Tashkent to northern Afghanistan. These programs, featuring music and commentary, were widely listened to, since Kabul Radio did not broadcast in *Uzbek*. *Uzbek* television from the Soviet border town of Termez also could be received by those few persons in the provincial capital of Mazar-i-Sharif who owned television sets.¹³⁴

Afghan Uzbeks often listened to these broadcasts. But many of them retained a legacy of hostility toward the USSR because of family experiences during the Basmachi revolts of the 1920s in the USSR. At that time, many Uzbeks in the Soviet Union had fled to refuge in northern Afghanistan. Anti-Islamic policies in Soviet Central Asia also had tarnished the USSR's image among devout Afghan Moslems.

THE NEW NATIONALITIES PROGRAM When the leftists seized power in April 1978, one of their proclaimed goals was greater recognition for ethnic minorities. This program was downplayed during the brief Amin era, September-December 1979, but was revived by the Babrak regime. The officially recognized Afghan minorities were given newspapers, magazines, radio broadcasts, and some primary school teaching in their native languages. The five recognized minority languages were: Uzbeki, Turkmani, Baluchi, Pashee, and Nuristani. The stated objective was equal rights and cooperation among all nationalities and tribes.

Members of the resistance were critical of the nationalities program. They pointed out that party propaganda was relentlessly propagated through the new program.¹³⁵ They also saw this program as a divide-and-rule tactic designed to win over minority elements. Since most of the officially recognized minority groups lived in the

northern provinces adjacent to the Soviet Union, some critics saw the policy as a way to wean these ethnic areas to the Soviet Union.¹³⁶



BY THE END OF 1983, SOVIET POLITICAL AND CULTURAL influence in areas under DRA-Soviet military control was pervasive. Some 10,000 or more Soviet civilian and military advisers controlled the government ministries and the military. The Afghan educational system had been totally revamped along Soviet lines, with translated Soviet textbooks used exclusively. At Kabul University, Soviets comprised a third of the faculty and staff. The media and the school system repeatedly pictured the Soviet Union as a beneficent, paragon state.

Soviet policy overall seemed intent on imposing Soviet culture and values on Afghanistan. In this regard, a British scholar has noted striking parallels between Soviet policies toward Soviet Central Asia, where Moslems and non-Russian ethnic peoples are dominant, and Soviet policies in Afghanistan. Examples are a seeming Soviet objective to make the Russian language the *lingua franca* of Afghanistan—by 1984 most books and periodicals available in Kabul bookstores were in Russian—and to emphasize Afghan linguistic plurality at the expense of the two dominant national Afghan languages (*Dari* and *Pushtu*). In the Afghan educational system, historic and ethnic ties between Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan were stressed, while Afghanistan's ties with Iran, South Asia, and the non-Soviet world were suppressed.¹³⁷

A major feature of the Sovietization of Afghanistan was the policy of sending Afghans to the USSR for university and other training. In 1983 between 10,000 and 20,000 Afghans were in the USSR, the largest foreign student element there. While the Soviets undoubtedly hoped that exposure to the USSR and Soviet training would create a pro-Soviet Afghan elite, this hope was by no means assured. Many returning Afghan students were disillusioned by their Soviet experience. Similarly, Chinese (PRC) officials who had once studied in the USSR categorically stated that their exposure to the Soviet Union had in no way diminished their loyalty to China or had engendered any affection for the USSR.¹³⁸

The key element ensuring Soviet control was the occupation of Afghanistan by 115,000 Soviet troops, more than twice the number of DRA army soldiers. Without this occupation force, which was present in all of the 29 Afghan provinces, the Soviet-installed Babrak government would have collapsed.

The Search for a Diplomatic Settlement and Afghanistan's Foreign Relations

In steering the government's foreign policy, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan is guided by the well-known principles formulated by Lenin.

*DRA Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost
July 1981*



ARDLY HAD SOVIET ARMORED TANKS STOPPED rumbling across Afghanistan at the end of 1979, when frantic diplomatic efforts were launched to effect their withdrawal. These efforts were viewed by many Afghans and foreign observers with skepticism. They reasoned that if the Soviets had been impelled in the first place to invade in order to impose a client regime, why then would they withdraw, when retreat almost surely would lead to the collapse of the imposed government?

This skepticism was borne out by subsequent events and Soviet statements. The Soviets immediately stated that their stay was "temporary" and that they were willing to withdraw. But they also insisted that a withdrawal would come only when armed resistance to the Kabul government ceased, and international guarantees were given that it would not resume. These conditions were impossible to fulfill. The resistance was indigenous and supported by an overwhelming majority of the people; most of the arms used by the resistance came from captured DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) supplies. Therefore, no practical way was seen in which international guarantees could stop the fighting.

Despite this unpromising outlook, many diplomatic approaches were made over the next five years to secure a Soviet withdrawal. The most important were the approaches made by the European Economic Community in 1981 and the UN Secretary General's office in 1981-84. Mild anti-Soviet sanctions also were tried—such as the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics and expulsion of the DRA from the Organization of the Islamic Conference—but these attempts to bring about a Soviet withdrawal were unsuccessful.

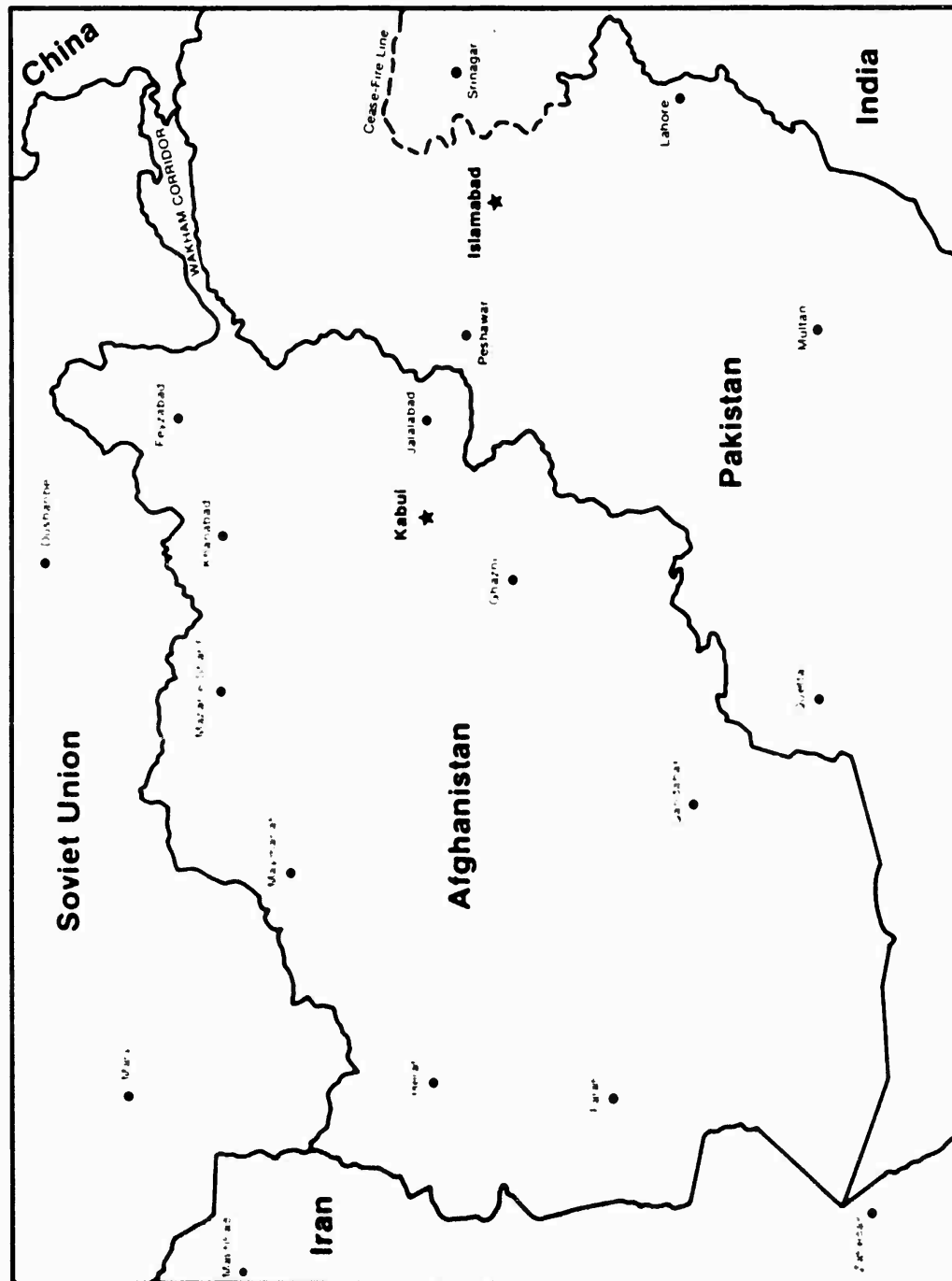
These diplomatic efforts were premised on the assumption that the Soviets might welcome a face-saving way to withdraw. Diplomats presumed that the Soviets were not insensitive to the considerable damage that had been done to their international prestige, or to the costs in Soviet lives and money resulting from the unexpectedly strong armed resistance put up by the Afghans. Since the Soviets had withdrawn from parts of Austria and Finland, after certain Soviet conditions were met, the idea of making Afghanistan another "Austria" or "Finland" was advanced. Though the Soviets often were inscrutable, many countries believed a diplomatic effort toward settlement of the Afghan issue was worth a try.

SOVIET-DRA CONDITIONS FOR SOVIET TROOP WITHDRAWAL

The starting point for efforts toward a settlement was an examination of DRA and Soviet conditions for withdrawal. These conditions had been hinted at immediately after the invasion: the DRA stated on 1 January 1980 that Soviet forces would be withdrawn when "foreign aggression and intervention ended."¹ Two weeks later, the Soviets declared that since their troops had been invited in to help counter "external aggression" they would be withdrawn "once the reasons for the Afghan leadership's request for them disappear."²

The "external aggression" referred to was a euphemism for the internal, indigenous Afghan resistance, which had threatened to collapse the Taraki and Amin governments. The problem for diplomats, seeking to induce the Soviets to withdraw, was how to meet this "stop-this-external-aggression" condition.

On 14 January 1980 the UN General Assembly, by a vote of 104 for, 18 against, and 18 abstaining, passed a resolution calling



for immediate Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. This action put the Soviets on the defensive diplomatically. So did critical statements of many individual countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

As a consequence, the Soviets issued in more detail their conditions for withdrawal four and a half months after the military intervention. Contained in a May 1980 statement by Babrak Karmal, terms for settlement essentially remained unaltered for the next four years; an exception was some unimportant procedural changes offered on 24 August 1981.³ These withdrawal conditions were as follows:

When the DRA government feels sure, and when there is an international guarantee that no foreign power will encroach on our national soil, and when the subversive bands formed in Pakistan, Iran, and Zinjiang in China have been eliminated and have ceased their aggression against our country, then the limited Soviet contingents will return to their peace-loving country as soon as possible.⁴

Soviet statements issued subsequently were little different. Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev, speaking before the 26th CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) Congress on 24 February 1981, stated:

As for the Soviet military contingent, we will be prepared to withdraw it with the agreement of the Afghan government. Before this is done, the infiltration of counterrevolutionary gangs into Afghanistan must be completely stopped. This must be secured in accords between Afghanistan and its neighbors. Dependable guarantees are required that there will be no new intervention. Such is the fundamental position of the Soviet Union, and we adhere to it firmly.⁵

DRA statements followed the same line. In January 1984, President Babrak Karmal declared over Kabul Radio that Soviet troops would remain in the country until "our frontiers are made safe."⁶

In essence, the DRA and Soviet messages made withdrawal contingent on international guarantees that armed Afghan resistance to

the Kabul regime would cease. This condition was based on the fictitious premise that the resistance movement was the creation of Pakistan and Iran, aided by China and the West. In short, the international community was being asked to recognize—and then guarantee—the permanence of the Soviet-imposed puppet regime.⁷

MODIFIED SOVIET TERMS? In the summer of 1983, Selig S. Harrison, a Carnegie Endowment Senior Associate, claimed that "Soviet sources" had outlined to him Soviet terms for a political settlement and withdrawal; on the face of it, these terms were less harsh than earlier statements suggested. These terms were as follows:

Friendly and "realistic" Afghans would recognize the continued need for Soviet military advisers in Afghanistan, as well as large-scale Soviet economic aid, despite the withdrawal of Soviet forces under the UN agreement. Soviet technical personnel would be required to help keep the Afghan military communications system in operation and to make sure that airfields and other installations are in repair. Given the continuing danger of American military intervention in Iran, Soviet forces might well have to return to Afghanistan at some point. Kabul should therefore be prepared to grant Moscow some form of military base rights, possibly patterned after the Porkkala naval base precedent in Finland.⁸

Harrison did not disclose who these "Soviet sources" were. As for the kind of government that would be acceptable, Harrison reported that the Soviets considered the (pro-Soviet Marxist) revolution "irreversible." They insisted, he said, that any government would have to be "realistic and progressive."⁹

While terms outlined by "Soviet sources" to Selig Harrison have a certain ring of plausibility, other writers, including this author, believe that the Soviets have no intention to withdraw for the foreseeable future. They intend to institutionalize their control and communist rule on Mongolian lines. This intent means that Afghanistan would be almost totally subordinate to the Soviet Union, especially in foreign policy and defense, and Soviet troops would be stationed permanently in the country to ensure that subordination.

DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

The first serious multilateral effort to obtain a face-saving Soviet withdrawal came from the European Economic Community (EEC). The British initiated this effort. The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, presented the EEC plan to Moscow on 6 July 1981. This proposal called for a two-stage international conference, to be held in Islamabad, Pakistan, in November 1981.

- The **first stage** of the conference was to be attended by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (the Soviet Union, China, the United States, Britain, and France), plus Pakistan, India, Iran, and some other member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The purpose of the first stage was to obtain a Soviet troop withdrawal. Simultaneously, conference participants would discuss "external threats" to Afghanistan, since the Soviets maintained that their forces were there only to counter external aggression. The EEC plan did not envisage any Afghan representation at this stage.¹⁰

- The **second stage** of the conference was to involve representatives of the Babrak regime and Afghan opposition forces. This stage would be concerned with internal political arrangements to be made in Afghanistan.

The ultimate aim of the conference was to secure an international declaration guaranteeing Afghanistan's independence and neutrality.¹¹

Many EEC leaders were skeptical of the likelihood of Soviet acceptance. But proponents of the proposal argued that the Soviets might welcome this initiative to relieve them of a costly and embarrassing burden. As it turned out, neither the Soviets nor the DRA had any use for the EEC plan. One reason undoubtedly was the exclusion of the DRA from the first stage; another reason was the proposed admission of opposition Afghan groups to the second stage. A third reason was the uncertain future of the Babrak regime.¹²

The spotlight turned to the UN after the abortive EEC effort

UNITED NATIONS EFFORTS

Of all the diplomatic attempts to effect a Soviet withdrawal, those involving the UN were the most important and persistent. These efforts had two aspects: resolutions passed by the UN General Assembly requesting a Soviet withdrawal; and negotiations by envoys of the UN Secretary General to bring about a political settlement.

UN RESOLUTIONS The UN resolutions were important, since they represented an expression—the most accurate measure available—of world public opinion regarding an Afghan settlement. During 1980-84, one potentially binding UN Security Council resolution secured a majority vote, but was vetoed by the USSR. Six non-binding UN General Assembly resolutions were adopted.¹³

The first resolution, voted on favorably by the Security Council but vetoed by the USSR on 7 January 1980, called for the “immediate and unconditional withdrawal of foreign troops” from Afghanistan. Predictably, the DRA objected to the Security Council debate, declaring it to be “direct interference in Afghan internal affairs.”¹⁴ Had the USSR not vetoed the resolution, the Soviets would have been legally bound, under the UN Charter, to withdraw their invasion force.

Since the USSR veto stymied action at the Security Council level, the issue was shifted to the UN General Assembly. Assembly political resolutions were not subject to a veto. But, on the other hand, they were not legally binding on member states. Nevertheless, many countries believed that resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly were beneficial, since they had a certain moral and psychological impact on world opinion.

Beginning in January 1980, and repeated at each session over the next five years, the UN General Assembly passed six resolutions (two in 1980) calling for the immediate withdrawal of “foreign troops” from Afghanistan. All six resolutions contained four essential demands and their wording remained virtually unchanged in the last four resolutions. Only between the first and second resolutions were demands watered down for purposes of maximizing votes.¹⁵

The first UN General Assembly resolution (24 January 1980) used the phrase “strongly deplores” and called for the “unconditional” withdrawal of foreign troops. The later resolutions deleted these three

words. Although all the UN General Assembly resolutions had multiple sponsors (44 in 1981), the prime mover always was Pakistan. The four points demanded in the last five UN General Assembly resolutions were as follows:

1) Preservation of the territorial integrity, political independence, and nonaligned character of Afghanistan.

2) The right of the Afghan people to self-determination of their own form of government; and the right to choose their economic, political, and social system, free of outside intervention, coercion, or constraint.

3) Immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan.

4) Return of Afghan refugees in safety and honor.

By diplomatic standards, the UN General Assembly resolutions strongly condemned the Soviet occupation. But many Afghans and Westerners were annoyed that the resolutions never mentioned the USSR by name. The applicable references always were to "foreign armed intervention" and "foreign troops." Since the Soviet Union was the invading party, many persons believed the UN resolutions should have said so. They were not convinced that the magnitude of votes would have been significantly affected by naming the country at fault.¹⁶

As shown in table 12, the pattern of voting in the UN showed a gradual increase in the number of votes in favor of the four points, including a Soviet withdrawal.

Table 12
Voting for UN General Assembly resolutions on Afghanistan¹⁷

Dates	For	Against	Abstain
14 January 1980	104	18	18
20 November 1980	111	22	12
18 November 1981	116	23	12
29 November 1982	114	21	13
23 November 1983	116	20	17
15 November 1984	119	20	14

Countries voting against the resolutions always were those from the Soviet bloc (except Romania), plus Third World countries with close ties to the USSR, such as Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Yemen, and Vietnam, plus Libya, Syria, and Madagascar. Most of the countries abstaining were from Africa; of other countries abstaining, India was the most important. Most of the abstainers had strong non-ideological reasons for doing so. They usually were states dependent on the USSR for military and economic aid; or, like Finland, they were in a sensitive geographical location.

The Soviets lobbied hard against the resolutions. A common annual tactic was a warning that a vote for the resolution would be regarded as an "unfriendly act."¹⁸

After each annual UN General Assembly resolution vote, DRA and Soviet representatives would cast scorn on the outcome. Following the November 1981 UN General Assembly resolution vote, the DRA delegate said he rejected the resolution as being illegal and "ridiculous," claiming that nobody had the right to tell Afghanistan what to do.¹⁹ The Soviet Permanent Representative, Oleg A. Troyanovsky, dismissed the November 1982 vote as "an artificial hue and cry" that had diverted the assembly from "really burning issues."²⁰

THE UN ATTEMPTS A DIPLOMATIC SETTLEMENT

The second UN General Assembly resolution (20 November 1980) mandated an effort by the UN Secretariat to find a negotiated settlement. This mandate was given despite a warning by DRA Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost that his government would not receive a UN representative to discuss a peaceful settlement of the Afghan question.²¹ The DRA relented subsequently, however, as an obvious result of successful UN diplomatic representations to Moscow.

Consequently, in February 1981 UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim appointed the then UN Undersecretary General for Special Political Affairs, Javier Perez de Cuellar, as his personal representative to try to secure a negotiated settlement leading to a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. In this role, Perez traveled twice to Kabul and Islamabad, in April and again in August 1981, and was able to achieve a procedural breakthrough. The Kabul regime announced on

24 August 1981 that it was prepared to hold not just bilateral talks with Pakistan and Iran, but trilateral talks via the UN among the three.

The significance of this breakthrough was that the Kabul government had dropped its demand for implicit diplomatic recognition by Pakistan. This recognition would have occurred *de facto* in any face-to-face Afghanistan-Pakistan bilateral discussions. Kabul accepted an active UN good offices role, rather than a more limited UN ceremonial part. Pakistan, for its part, agreed to engage in negotiations through a UN intermediary with an Afghan government it did not fully recognize. And Iran no longer opposed UN efforts to find a settlement.²²

FIRST ROUND OF TALKS The subsequent talks in June 1982 in Geneva turned out to be bilateral between the DRA and Pakistan—not trilateral. Iran decided not to take part but agreed to be kept informed. The reason Iran gave for not taking part was that “the real representatives of Afghanistan,” presumably the *mujahidin*, were not present. Spokesmen for various Afghan resistance groups also protested the talks for the same reason. Though Moscow technically was not a party to the discussions, it sent high-level observers to Geneva.

Everybody knew that the Soviets were the real party with whom Pakistan was talking—and the Pakistanis surmised that the Soviets drafted all DRA statements and positions.²³ The fact that the Soviets orchestrated the DRA positions was confirmed by a former Afghan career diplomat, Abdo Majid Mangal, who fled to Pakistan from Kabul in 1984. In a June 1984 article for the London *Sunday Telegraph*, Mangal commented on the Geneva negotiations as follows:

*All the proposals put forward in the name of the Kabul regime were in fact drafted by the Russians, who had their own watchdog always on duty during the Geneva meetings.*²⁴

Because Pakistan did not fully recognize the DRA regime, the UN special envoy, by then Diego Cordovez, shuttled between the Geneva venues of the Pakistani and DRA delegations trying to negotiate the positions of each. Diego Cordovez, who carried the title of UN Under Secretary General for Special Political Affairs, also was billed as the UN Secretary General’s personal representative. He

replaced Javier Perez de Cuellar as UN Special Envoy when Perez was elected UN Secretary General.

By previous agreement among the concerned parties, the four items for discussion at the Geneva meeting were: "the withdrawal of foreign troops; non-interference in the internal affairs of states; international guarantees of non-interference; and the voluntary return of the refugees to their homes."²⁵

Although the UN General Assembly resolutions charged the UN Special Envoy to take into account the four UN General Assembly demands, one of these—the right of Afghans to self-determination—was in fact omitted in the Geneva terms of reference. This right would prove to be a major stumbling block to an eventual settlement.

In any case, the June 1982 Geneva talks—subsequently called the First Round of Talks, or **Geneva I**—proved inconclusive. Yet the public tone of the participants was optimistic when the talks recessed. The UN, Pakistan, and Afghanistan (DRA) all issued positive statements. They also indicated that a measure of flexibility had occurred in the negotiating positions of both sides. At a press conference on 25 June 1982 Diego Cordovez referred to "certain important political concessions." He said that the talks had moved beyond procedural questions to substantive matters. "We concluded a kind of package of understanding," he added.²⁶

By the end of Geneva I, Cordovez reportedly had in hand a proposed 20-page draft text of an agreement. This text was to be formalized into two separate but similar agreements. The first agreement was designed to be signed by Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the UN. The second agreement would be signed by the USSR, the United States, and the People's Republic of China. Iran was not to be a signatory to either agreement because of its non-participation, but the UN hoped that it would not object to them.

Mixed world reaction about the prospects for a settlement followed the June talks. Some diplomats felt that the key to a settlement lay outside the issue of Afghanistan, in an overall improvement in Soviet-US relations, but many doubted that this was likely in the foreseeable future. Others questioned whether the Soviets were

sincere in their stated willingness to withdraw, since few believed the Babrak regime could survive a Soviet troop withdrawal. Others also questioned whether the US Government really was interested in a pull-out, since the Afghanistan issue provided a powerful propaganda weapon against the Soviets.²⁷

SECOND ROUND OF TALKS In the months following the June discussions, both Diego Cordovez and UN Secretary General Perez tried to narrow the differences between the two sides. In January and February 1983 Cordovez again visited Pakistan and Afghanistan to refine the draft text. In March he and Perez went to Moscow to review the negotiations with both Soviet Premier Yuri Andropov and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. According to the UN Secretary General, the Soviets expressed themselves strongly in favor of a political settlement and supported continuation of the UN effort.²⁸

As a result, a Second Round of Talks, called **Geneva II**, was held in two parts: 11-22 April 1983; and 12-24 June 1983. As before, Cordovez met separately in Geneva with the Pakistani and Afghan representatives, and with the Soviet observers, trying to obtain an acceptable draft text. Once again, Cordovez kept the designated Iranian representative informed of the discussions. At the conclusion of the April talks, Cordovez announced optimistically that "substantial progress" had been made "in all areas" and that the negotiations were "95 percent complete."²⁹

Many observers in the outside world felt that a settlement was in the offing. How the text actually read was not made public. Leaks, however, reported that the text contained five important elements, as follows:³⁰

- 1) Soviet troops would leave Afghanistan, but some Soviet military advisers could remain.
- 2) An Afghan regime not dissimilar to the DRA (that is, pro-Soviet) initially would be in power in Kabul.
- 3) All weapons traffic through Pakistan to Afghan resistance forces would cease; and a de facto cease-fire would occur in the fighting in Afghanistan while the Soviets withdrew.
- 4) Afghan refugees would return home.

5) The DRA no longer would attempt to incite Baluchi and Pathan tribesmen in Pakistan's border provinces against the Pakistan government.*

OPTIMISM FOR A SETTLEMENT FADES Soon after the April 1983 talks, the euphoria evaporated. Whether a settlement ever was really near is problematical. Some observers criticized Diego Cordovez for having issued overly optimistic statements.

In any case, before the second series of Geneva II discussions opened on 12 June 1983 the positions on both sides seemed to have hardened. Before the June meetings, Pakistani Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan had undertaken extensive consultations. He visited Beijing, London, Paris, Riyadh, Washington, and Moscow. In late May, while these visits were occurring, the Soviet Ambassador to Pakistan charged that the United States was trying to "torpedo the Geneva talks." But the Soviets did not spell out this charge.³¹

In early June, Pakistani Foreign Secretary Niaz Naik told an interviewer that none of the major issues in fact really had been settled. He also said that one issue—the kind of Afghan government that would prevail following the Soviet withdrawal—had not been addressed at all. Naik said that the Soviet Union "certainly knows" that the Babrak government could not survive a Soviet troop departure. Any Afghan government that tilted toward the Soviets would be unpopular in Afghanistan.³²

These comments suggested that neither side seemed prepared to make substantive concessions beyond their last positions.

At the June 1983 meetings in Geneva, the parties reportedly made progress in defining some aspects of the proposed agreement.

*The Pathans are a seminomadic people consisting of some 60 tribes, numbering 5 million in Afghanistan and 4 million in Pakistan. After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the new nation annexed the Pathan border regions and a Pathan independence movement, called the Redshirts, was born. Afghanistan supported Pathan ambitions for creation of an independent Pushtunistan in the border areas of West Pakistan in the early 1950s, and several border clashes and ruptures of diplomatic relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan ensued. In the early 1970s, thousands of armed Pathan tribesmen pressed for increasing autonomy within Pakistan. The Pathans are Moslem and speak *Pushtu*. Baluchi and Pathan pastoral nomads make up the bulk of the sparse population (1,484,000 estimated in 1969) of Baluchistan.

Notable were principles and objectives, the interrelationship among its four major components (the earlier fifth point on Soviet encouragement of Pakistani dissidence was considered minor), and provisions for implementation. But the talks stalled on substantive points. No real breakthrough occurred.³³

STUMBLING BLOCKS Three important issues, as follow, became stumbling blocks, on which no settlement was reached:

- 1) Timetable for a Soviet troop withdrawal.
- 2) Timetable for ending arms traffic to resistance forces in Afghanistan.
- 3) Form of government in Kabul after a Soviet withdrawal.

The Pakistani side pressed particularly for a timetable for Soviet troop withdrawal. A Pakistani diplomatic source said: "we keep trying to raise it, and we get no specific figures. . . . We consider it vital to the whole issue, the starting point."³⁴

According to some informed sources, Pakistan sought a rapid withdrawal over a period of three to six months. According to another report, which probably was fictitious, the Soviets offered an 18-month timetable.³⁵ Official US and Pakistani statements pointed out that the Soviets did not offer a timetable. In fact, certain official sources stated that the Soviets insisted that troop withdrawal not be part of a UN settlement, but rather a separate bilateral agreement between Moscow and Kabul.³⁶

The second stumbling block was the DRA (and Soviet) insistence on a watertight guarantee that all outside aid to the guerrillas would stop. The DRA seemed to have in mind with this guarantee that all armed resistance to the DRA would cease.³⁷ While Pakistan probably could stop some flow of arms through its territory into Afghanistan, it could not stop the fighting inside Afghanistan.

The third stumbling block was the type of post-troop withdrawal regime that would govern from Kabul. No procedure for bringing the resistance leaders into an eventual settlement had been worked out.³⁸ According to some observers, the Pakistanis at one stage did not press the self-determination issue, since they considered it unrealistic to do so if Soviet agreement were desired.³⁹ Some sources hoped that

once a Soviet withdrawal began, the recalcitrant Afghan resistance leaders would go along with any UN settlement.⁴⁰

UN sources said that UN Secretary General Perez was hopeful that the Afghan resistance representation issue could be solved by bringing representatives of "Afghan refugees" to the bargaining table. This plan would be in lieu of having representatives of the resistance groups. But it got nowhere. The presence of such participants would have established an awkward precedent for the UN in other problem areas of the world. In any case, the participation of refugee groups was rejected by the Babrak government.⁴¹ The Babrak regime declared that only the UN High Commissioner for Refugees could "consult" the Afghan refugees and that no other Afghan participants than the DRA could take part.⁴²

After the June talks, the Pakistanis claimed violation of an earlier accepted understanding by all parties for "simultaneity in the implementation of each of the four elements of the settlement." One of those settlements called for a Soviet withdrawal. This Pakistani statement implied that the DRA-Soviets had now reneged.⁴³

What had happened, according to one source, was that the Soviets made it clear during the June talks that they were not willing to provide a timetable for troop withdrawal. The Soviets, this source said, insisted that withdrawal could not begin until a permanent guaranteed end to all armed resistance against the DRA first occurred.⁴⁴

MORE TALKS? Following the unsuccessful two-part Geneva II, the parties initially agreed that Diego Cordovez should revisit the region in September 1983 for further discussions. In late summer, however, he decided that such a visit would be unproductive.

Later, in October 1983, the Pakistani Foreign Minister came several days early to the autumn UN General Assembly session in New York, hoping that the DRA Foreign Minister would do the same and that talks could occur in New York. The Afghan representative did not do so, implying by his posture that the Soviets were not ready to make any substantive concessions. Nevertheless, after the Pakistani and Afghan Foreign Ministers both arrived, Cordovez and Perez met with them to explore possibilities for resuming the diplomatic process. The responses were so promising that the UN issued a press statement on 30 November 1983 that Cordovez would continue

the diplomatic effort by holding further talks in Islamabad, Kabul, and Tehran at mutually convenient dates.⁴⁵

Privately, Western diplomats were saying as the new year of 1984 broke that the talks were dead. According to a US Department of State letter to *The Washington Post* on 30 January 1984, "Soviet recalcitrance is the problem, not an alleged US unwillingness to accept the UN settlement proposal." Declared the State Department: "we have seen no indication that the Kremlin is ready to negotiate meaningfully to end its war against the Afghan nation."⁴⁶

For its part, the DRA also was not sanguine about the future outlook for the talks. DRA Foreign Minister Dost told an Italian interviewer early in January 1984: "there has been some progress, but I would beware of excessive optimism."⁴⁷ In August 1984, another round of what now was called the "proximity" talks was held in Geneva. But again no progress toward a settlement was achieved.

Outside government circles, few persons, least of all Afghans in the resistance movement, expected any UN negotiated settlement.⁴⁸ "The crux of the problem," wrote a prominent Afghan emigre, "was to find a way for Moscow to withdraw its troops and for the Afghans to have a government of their own choosing." Unless these two conditions were met, he warned, "the Afghan resistance will have nothing to do with such an accord."⁴⁹

In the Geneva talks, the principle of self-determination had made little headway. Related to this, many Afghans felt that without the consent of the principal resistance groups, no settlement was workable. Afghan resistance leaders warned that if a settlement perchance were reached that they considered inimical to Afghan interests, the estimated three million Afghan refugees living in Pakistan—many of whom had access to arms—would cause trouble for the Pakistan government.⁵⁰

THE DRA'S FOREIGN POLICY

During the 1978-79 Taraki-Amin era, the foreign policies of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union had been difficult to tell apart. Any difference seemed to be of tone and emphasis; for example, DRA criticism of the United States and China was less strident than that by

the USSR. After the Soviet invasion, the foreign policies of the DRA and the USSR were indistinguishable.

In President Babrak Karmal's New Year's Day address on 19 March 1984, he underlined the DRA's support for the Soviet Union's foreign policy as follows:

*We are on the side of the forces of peace and progress, headed by the Soviet Union, and completely support the principled, rational, and humane policy of our great northern neighbor in defending peace, the security of peoples, and stopping the warmongering designs of imperialism.*⁵¹

SOVIET CONTROL OVER THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

After the Soviet invasion, a team of Soviet advisers attached to the DRA Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared all major Afghan foreign policy statements. In some cases, explained Mohammed Daoud Mohabbat, former Director of the First Political Affairs Section (Asian relations), these draft statements never were shown to the appropriate Afghan Foreign Ministry officials before being published in the controlled press.⁵² Furthermore, stated Mohabbat, the Soviets had total access to the Foreign Ministry's classified files and systematically examined them. "This is very painful to us," Mohabbat said. "All of our archives are open to them. I watched them take seven large cupboards of documents." Of particular interest to the Soviets were the original maps of the Afghan-Pakistani border.⁵³

Referring to staff changes at the Foreign Ministry, Mohabbat said that PDPA (Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan) members composed 90 percent of the staff. Since 1979, about half the career officers had defected abroad, he said, while most of the remainder had been involuntarily retired or transferred to other ministries. He also reported a heavy infusion of agents of the Afghan secret police (KHAD) into diplomatic posts abroad.⁵⁴

Soviet control extended even to Afghan diplomatic posts abroad. In June 1982, an Afghan diplomat, Sayed Asif, who defected from the Afghan Embassy in New Delhi, reported that a Soviet diplomat gave the orders to the embassy, not only on policy matters but on day-to-day administrative matters. In fact, the embassy was not

permitted to send messages to the DRA Foreign Ministry in Kabul without first clearing them with the Soviet official.⁵⁵

Another former career Afghan diplomat, Abdol Majid Mangal, described Soviet control over the Afghan Embassy in Moscow, where he served from August 1980 to August 1983, part of the time as charge d'affaires. Two of his examples of Soviet control follow:

- (Soviet) ranking officials—all the military and political “advisers,” KGB and so on—just went in and out of Afghanistan as though there was no border there. For these people, the formality of a visa didn’t exist. (As for other Soviet personnel) a Soviet Foreign Ministry official would simply turn up unannounced at our embassy with a huge pile of passports, and then just stand over our visa officer while he stamped them—sometimes more than 200 in one batch. We were never allowed to question applicants or even be told anything about them. Everything had to be done at once and, of course, the passports could never be left with us overnight.

- (When a West German diplomatic colleague asked to call on me) I of course told my ambassador, who immediately said he would have to submit the request to the Russians. It was only 48 hours afterwards that permission was granted. We heard later that it was not only the Afghan Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry which had been consulted, but also the section of the Soviet Central Committee which dealt with Afghan affairs. I had to report of course on my talk with the West German diplomat. All he wanted was to have a general discussion between two professionals.⁵⁶

DRA FOREIGN POLICY When asked by a correspondent from the East German news agency ADN (Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst) in April 1980 what he considered the most important change in Afghanistan’s foreign policy since the April 1978 revolution, DRA Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost replied: “Afghanistan’s firm inclusion in the ranks of the . . . progressive countries of the world.”⁵⁷ Later, in March 1982, when President Babrak Karmal was asked by a BBC correspondent how Afghanistan’s foreign policy differed from that of the Soviet Union, Babrak’s evasive answer implied that the convergence was unplanned and grew out of common historical ties.⁵⁸

Cosmetically, one difference did exist between the foreign policies of the Soviet Union and Afghanistan. Afghanistan was a member

of the nonaligned movement, while the Soviet Union was not. Although this membership made no practical difference in the foreign policies of the two countries, it did enable the DRA to attend and vote at nonaligned movement meetings.

According to DRA pronouncements and speeches, the Kabul government's foreign policy after the Soviet invasion was based on the following five principles:⁵⁹

- 1) Solidarity with the Soviet Union.
- 2) Peaceful coexistence and noninterference in internal affairs of other states.
- 3) Opposition to imperialism, colonialism, and neocolonialism.
- 4) Support for national liberation movements.
- 5) Non-participation in any military alliance.

As for implementation of the principles listed above, some of which seemed contradictory, the DRA's Acting Defense Minister, Abdul Qader, told a Yugoslav *Tanjug* correspondent on 27 January 1982 that in the future the Afghan army would play a significant role like that of the Cuban and Vietnamese armies. Qader continued: "not far away is the day when our army will become a strong and energetic army capable of defending peace and security not only in Afghanistan, but in the region as well."⁶⁰

This thought implied a Soviet-surrogate role for the DRA army like that of the Cuban army in Angola and Ethiopia, or an expansionary role, like Vietnam's takeover of Laos and Cambodia. Any projected Cuban- or Vietnamese-type role, however, was something for the future. At the moment Kabul was more concerned with achieving two immediate pragmatic objectives, not clearly mentioned in its foreign policy pronouncements. These aims were to—

- Gain international diplomatic recognition as an independent government.
- Persuade its three unfriendly neighbors (Pakistan, Iran, and China) to cease assistance to opposition elements.

Kabul was not successful in either of these priority objectives.

While the DRA was not expelled from the UN or from any UN-affiliated agencies after the Soviet intervention, it did experience setbacks elsewhere. The Organization of the Islamic Conference, an

important body for most Islamic countries, expelled the DRA in January 1980. And six UN General Assembly resolutions passed by between 104 and 119 members of the United Nations called for the withdrawal of Soviet troops and for the right of self-determination.

Kabul claimed to have diplomatic relations with 60 countries.⁶¹ But only 28 resident foreign embassies were located in Kabul; and most of them dated from before the Soviet intervention. Of the 15 headed by ambassadors, eight were from Soviet-bloc countries.⁶² Most of the non-communist embassies in Kabul were headed by charges d'affaires, as a sign of disapproval by their governments; these officials were under instruction to limit official contacts to administrative and consular matters.⁶³ The explanation given was that Afghanistan was recognized as a nation, but not its Soviet-installed government.

Afghanistan shares borders with four countries. But the DRA had good relations with only one of these border-sharing countries—the USSR. The other three bordering countries—Pakistan, Iran, and the People's Republic of China—refused to recognize fully the Babrak regime; they gave succor and support to the Afghan opposition in varying degrees and ways. Repeated attempts by Kabul and Moscow to woo or pressure Islamabad and Tehran to recognize the Babrak government—and for Pakistan to suppress all Afghan resistance organizations on its soil—were unsuccessful. China's stance toward the Soviet intervention was so implacably hostile that neither Kabul nor Moscow made any serious attempt at reconciliation.

During the first five years of Soviet occupation, the Kabul regime was viewed by most of the international community as a pariah government. Trade, however, continued with countries that did not fully recognize Kabul's government. But levels of trade were much lower (mostly for insurgency reasons) than before the Soviet intervention.

RELATIONS WITH THE TWO SUPERPOWERS

DRA RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION

The public image of the bilateral relationship that Afghanistan and the Soviet Union tried to present was one of equality between

two independent countries. Each maintained an embassy in the other's capital city. And after the invasion each established a consulate in a provincial city in the other's country. The Soviets established their consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif, not far from the Soviet border; the DRA opened its in Tashkent. Few countries, however, were deluded into believing the relationship was anything other than Soviet control over a compliant puppet regime.

The public basis for the close bilateral relationship was the Afghan-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation of 5 December 1978, signed in Moscow by President Taraki and Premier Brezhnev. The treaty was referred to constantly in foreign policy statements, particularly as being the legal basis for the Soviet intervention.

Quite apart from this 1978 treaty, the Soviet Union's special position in Afghanistan also was inscribed in Article 11 of the 1980 DRA interim constitution, called the Basic Principles. In Article 11 the DRA was required to "strengthen its . . . cooperation and friendship with the USSR . . . and all the countries of the socialist alliance on the principle of internationalist solidarity."⁶⁴ In July 1981, DRA Foreign Minister Dost underlined the DRA's dependence and reliance on the Soviet Union. He said:

*No one in our country has tried to conceal the fact that we regard the relations with the Soviet Union . . . as a precondition for the successful development of our independence and the consolidation of our state's international position.*⁶⁵

SOVIET POLICY No discernible change occurred in Soviet policy toward Afghanistan during the years 1980-84. After the death of Premier Leonid Brezhnev in 1982,⁶⁶ his successor, Yuri V. Andropov, instituted no change. Nor did Premier Konstantin U. Chernenko, who succeeded Yuri Andropov on 9 February 1984 and remained in power until his death on 11 March 1985. A 16 December 1982 editorial in *Pravda* and a 31 December 1982 *Tass* statement reaffirmed previous Soviet conditions for a settlement and withdrawal of Soviet troops. The 16 December *Pravda* editorial explained:

The Soviet Union . . . is not going to make Afghanistan a base against other countries, and (has) expressed a readiness to withdraw its troops upon agreement with the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan without delay as soon as

*foreign interference in Afghan affairs has ceased and guarantees of non-resumption of such interference in the future have been given. The Soviet Union is interested in seeing Afghanistan remaining a neutral and non-aligned state and its good neighbor. . . . Nothing has changed in this principled Soviet position.*⁶⁷

RARE SOVIET EXPRESSIONS OF REGRET OVER INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN Very few Soviet officials publicly have questioned the appropriateness of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Two of the rare examples of this questioning have been collated by the American analyst Joseph J. Collins. He reported the following instances:⁶⁸

- In March 1981, Vitaly Kobyshev, deputy head of the Central Committee International Information Department, told a Cincinnati audience that the intervention was "a mistake."
- In April 1981, Yuri Velikanov, a Soviet diplomat in the Seychelles Islands, stated: "for us, Afghanistan is an embarrassment. There were mistakes when we went in, and we are looking for ways to get out."

These Soviet statements probably were not authorized.

DRA RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

Though diplomatic ties between Afghanistan and the United States never were broken, the state of the relationship between the two countries hardly could have been worse. To the DRA, the United States was one of its principal enemies. Virtually every speech made by a Politburo or Cabinet member—and almost every statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—contained some pejorative remark about the United States.

This hostile attitude became apparent at the very start of the Babrak regime, suggesting that it was deliberately planned by the Soviet Union. In Babrak's first speech to the nation, on 1 January 1980, he referred to his predecessor, Hafizullah Amin, as that "blood-thirsty agent of American imperialism."⁶⁹ Amin, he said, had been overthrown by patriotic Afghan party members. The charge that Amin had been an American espionage agent became a major propaganda theme; it repeatedly was used by the Babrak regime during its

first year to justify its coming to power. This theme reached a climax on 15 March 1980 when the DRA announced that it had sent a diplomatic note to the US Embassy in Kabul demanding information and documents relating to Amin's "crimes and subversive and conspiratorial activities . . . particularly those connected with the CIA."⁷⁰ The embassy ignored this diplomatic note.

After 1980, the Amin-US connection theme gradually was dropped; in its place a second theme emerged: "US interference in [Afghan] internal affairs" or, as it often was labeled, the "undeclared war."⁷¹ This theme was described in a 1981 DRA statement as follows:

It is well known that American imperialist circles from the very beginning took an openly hostile stand toward the national-democratic revolution in Afghanistan. Soon after the Saur Revolution the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) started to organize on a large scale armed intervention and provocations against the DRA. The CIA was charged with organizing, arming, equipping and training Afghan counter-revolutionary groups on the territory of Pakistan.

*The scale of American support to the counterrevolutionary bands was stepped up after their agent Amin was removed from power in December 1979 and the new stage of the Saur Revolution began.*⁷²

LIMITED DIPLOMATIC TIES Though diplomatic relations between Afghanistan and the United States were strained, each country continued to maintain an embassy in the capital of the other country. The United States, however, did not fully recognize the Babrak government. To show its disapproval, the United States first had as the head of its embassy a charge d'affaires and then later an acting charge d'affaires. As explained officially by the US Department of State:

*The United States does not conduct normal diplomatic relations with the (Babrak) Karmal regime. The small US Embassy in Kabul, headed by an acting charge d'affaires, deals with the Afghanistan government on the administrative and consular level only.*⁷³

During Acting Charge d'Affaires Charles Dunbar's 22 months in Kabul, "Dunbar saw no Afghan government official except members of the Foreign Ministry's protocol branch."⁷⁴

The United States was not alone in its stance. All the other NATO countries, along with Japan and most of the Islamic countries, also replaced their ambassadors with charges d'affaires. Why the DRA tolerated this diplomatic affront was explained by Acting Charge d'Affaires Dunbar as follows: "the Afghans are willing to have us there because our presence lends a degree of legitimacy to their government."⁷⁵

THE AMERICAN EMBASSY BECOMES A TARGET The small American Embassy complement in Kabul was a frequent object of hostility. In 1983 a *Washington Post* correspondent said "the 20 Americans assigned to the Kabul embassy operate in one of the most hostile environments of any US diplomatic mission in the world."⁷⁶ This hostility took various forms; some are described as follows:

- *Periodic DRA-organized demonstrations in front of the embassy.* For example, on 20 March 1982 the DRA claimed that "more than 200,000 of the toiling people of Kabul today held a glorious and massive march to protest US imperialism's shameless interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs."⁷⁷

Another "more than 200,000 toilers" staged a similar demonstration in front of the embassy on 30 December 1982.⁷⁸ The crowds always were disciplined and usually did no damage to embassy property.

- *Arrest and intimidation of Afghan employees at the embassy.* Arrests and intimidations of local staff began during the Taraki-Amin era but became more frequent after the Soviet invasion. Afghan employees always had played important roles in the embassy's operations. They were prominent in administrative and consular sections, where they handled the embassy's accounts, made local purchases, processed shipments through customs, worked as receptionists and telephone operators, and served as visa clerks. Other Afghans translated local newspapers.

In 1982, four of the American Embassy's local Afghan employees were arrested; then in April 1983 another 15 were picked up. Still later in 1983 another six were pressured by the DRA to resign. As of the end of 1983, a dozen or so of the embassy's Afghan staff were

thought to be in jail.⁷⁹ In all, three-fourths of the local white-collar Afghan staff members either were arrested or forced to leave.⁸⁰ Some of the embassy-hired gate guards and house servants of the American staff also were arrested.

A few of those arrested were forced to make public anti-American "confessions." A gate guard arrested in the spring of 1982 appeared on Kabul television in December 1982; he described the embassy as a "nest of spies" from where guns, mines, and bombs were channeled to the *mujahidin*. This charge promptly was denied by the embassy as "ludicrous and without foundation."⁸¹ In September 1983, an arrested visa clerk made a similar accusation.⁸²

- *Harassment and arrests of embassy third-country employees.* Because of the lack of English-speaking and skilled administrative personnel in Afghanistan, the American Embassy long had used the services of Indian nationals recruited in India for administrative work. A Pakistani national helped run the embassy commissary. Though the number of third-country national employees was reduced after the Soviet invasion, four were kept on: three Indians, and the Pakistani.

In 1983, the DRA refused to extend the visas of the three Indians, forcing their return to India. The Pakistani had been arrested in 1982. In September 1983 he made a television "confession" that he had been used for intelligence gathering purposes.⁸³

The United States did not idly stand by to these personnel harassment actions. It strongly protested the treatment of embassy personnel to the DRA Foreign Ministry; and the American Embassy was supported by diplomatic demarches made by many other non-communist missions in Kabul. No more arrests took place at the American Embassy during the rest of 1983, but by then almost all non-American clerical employees had gone. No other embassies in Kabul experienced the same degree of harassment.⁸⁴

- *The embassy was guarded by special elements of the Afghan secret police (KHAD), instead of the ordinary police assigned to the chanceries of most diplomatic missions.*⁸⁵

- *No Afghan citizen was allowed into the embassy's property nor to any American diplomat's home.* Exceptions were the few remaining embassy employees and household servants, or those few Afghans who were given DRA clearance to apply for visas. Even

foreign visitors had to prove their identities before police would allow them through the embassy gate.⁸⁶

This latter measure probably was taken in part to prevent another incident of a Soviet seeking political asylum, as occurred in 1980. (See below.)

- *No cars with Afghan non-diplomatic licenses were allowed through the embassy gate.* "Low-level fights" sometimes developed over deliveries of goods. Acting Charge d'Affaires Dunbar said: "it's a constant struggle to bring in supplies."⁸⁷

- *American diplomats often were declared unacceptable appointees or persona non grata.* In 1982 Kabul refused to accept Archer K. Blood, former deputy chief of mission in Kabul and New Delhi, as charge d'affaires. In 1983 three embassy officers were expelled on two occasions, in May and September.

No other diplomatic mission in Kabul experienced any expulsions. In retaliation, the United States expelled one of the two Afghan diplomats assigned to the small DRA Embassy in Washington.⁸⁸ Just as American diplomats (and other diplomats) were restricted by the DRA to Kabul itself, so too were Afghan diplomats not allowed to travel more than 12.43 miles from the center of Washington, DC, or 25 miles from the center of New York without US permission.⁸⁹

Summing up the Embassy's difficult situation, Acting Charge d'Affaires Dunbar said "there is a very high degree of official hostility, as high as it can be and still have an Embassy there."⁹⁰

A SOVIET SOLDIER DEFECTS TO THE US EMBASSY On 15 September 1980 an episode occurred that angered and seemingly embarrassed the Soviets. A Soviet soldier, Pvt. Aleksandr V. Kruglov, carrying his Kalashnikov AK-47 rifle, entered the US Embassy in Kabul and sought political asylum. Normally, the United States does not like to grant asylum to political defectors at its embassies abroad. Such action usually creates severe bilateral political problems and complicates embassy housekeeping arrangements. Given the already hostile environment in which the American Embassy operated, the defection of Pvt. Kruglov predictably caused a diplomatic mini-uproar.

The Soviets, learning of the defection, demanded the immediate return of Pvt. Kruglov. Through the DRA, the Soviets initiated a series of pressuring actions against the embassy. Cars belonging to American diplomats were searched, access to the chancery building was made difficult, Soviet helicopters buzzed the chancery, and its phones periodically were cut. Five days later, after intense negotiations between Washington and Moscow, Pvt. Kruglov voluntarily left the embassy. He received assurances from the Soviet Ambassador that he would not be prosecuted for his action and could leave the Soviet army. No Westerners ever learned whether the Soviet government honored its promise to Pvt. Kruglov.⁹¹

US DIPLOMATIC POLICY TOWARD AFGHANISTAN US diplomatic policy under the administrations of Democratic President Jimmy Carter and Republican President Ronald Reagan remained unchanged in its objectives throughout the five-year period, 1980-84. But implementation of this policy differed.

The first major formulation of US policy was made by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance on 27 March 1980, when he declared: "the Soviet invasion is not only a challenge to our interests but to those of our allies as well." The solution to the Afghan problem, he said, required the following three steps:⁹²

- 1) **Withdrawal** of all Soviet military forces from Afghanistan.
- 2) **Restoration** of a neutral, nonaligned Afghanistan, with a government that would be responsive to the wishes of the Afghan people.
- 3) **Guarantee** of true neutrality for Afghanistan, and noninterference in Afghan internal affairs by the country's neighbors; the United States indicated that it would be willing to join in this undertaking.

As long as Soviet troops remained in Afghanistan, Secretary Vance warned that the United States would take and maintain certain actions against the USSR, such as "on grain, on technology, on the Olympics, and in other areas." These steps were translated into a partial US grain embargo, imposition of tighter criteria governing exceptions from controls on high-technology exports to the USSR, and US opposition to participation by any country in the Moscow Olympics.⁹³

When Ronald Reagan replaced Jimmy Carter as President in January 1981, no change was made regarding the steps outlined above. In early 1981, however, US policy toward Afghanistan was reformulated, to bring it closer in line with the four principles contained in the UN General Assembly resolution of November 1980. These four principles in essence were no different from the three steps enumerated by Secretary Vance early in 1980. In December 1982 US policy was declared to be as follows:

*The United States seeks the total withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan through a negotiated settlement, which will provide for other essential requirements spelled out in four UN resolutions on Afghanistan: self-determination of the Afghan people, independent and nonaligned status of Afghanistan, and return of refugees with safety and honor. The United States supports UN efforts to achieve these goals.*⁹⁴

Though the Reagan administration's objective thus was no different from its predecessor, its implementation was. One change related to sanctions. President Reagan lifted the partial embargo on grain sales to the Soviet Union; the explanation was that the embargo had hurt American farmers while doing little damage to the Soviets.

To counterbalance this weakening of US pressure, the Reagan administration tried to tie overall improvement of Soviet-US ties to a Soviet troop withdrawal. Secretary of State Alexander Haig informed Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko on three occasions in 1981 and 1982 that the Soviet occupation remained a "major impediment to prospects of United States-Soviet relations."⁹⁵ In July 1982, the United States and the Soviet Union held a round of discussions on Afghanistan in Moscow, but these talks were unfruitful. The Soviets indicated no willingness to change their policy.

The most important new element was strong US support for a UN-negotiated settlement, efforts toward which were started by the UN in 1981.

CRITICISMS OF AMERICAN POLICY Little domestic criticism of American foreign policy objectives toward Afghanistan was evident. But opposition was shown at different times to steps taken to implement that policy. During the Carter administration, the partial grain embargo and the 1980 Summer Olympic boycott drew

strong criticism from the domestic farm bloc and from athletes who wished to compete in the Olympics. Once the Olympics were over and the partial grain embargo was lifted these criticisms diminished.

US public interest in Afghanistan thereafter declined, and American policy toward that country no longer was a controversial public issue. A few Americans, notably Carnegie Endowment Senior Associate Selig S. Harrison, continued to criticize US policy severely.

Many Americans believed the United States should give significant support, including substantial arms aid, to Afghan forces opposing the Soviet occupation and its puppet government. This view was expressed in the proposed joint House-Senate (Tsongas-Ritter) Resolution 237, which called on the President to "render effective material aid to the freedom fighters." Though the resolution commanded wide congressional support, it was not put to a vote in 1983 on account of the views of Senator Charles Mathias (R-Md.), who was concerned about what practical effect the resolution might have; Senator Mathias also argued that its passage might endanger the diplomatic negotiations undertaken by the UN special envoy.⁹⁶ The resolution finally was passed in 1984.

Congressional interest in supporting the resistance encompassed conservatives and liberals, and had equal support from the Democratic and Republican parties. Among the strongest congressional supporters of the Afghan resistance were Rep. Charles Wilson (D-Texas) and Senator Gordon J. Humphrey (R-N.H.).

Critics of aid to the resistance, or to opposing Soviet terms to a settlement, were represented by James A. Nathan, a University of Delaware political scientist, and by Harrison. In September 1980, Nathan argued publicly that providing arms to the Afghan resistance would be a "blunder." Since any arms aid likely would be insufficient to overcome superior Soviet forces, he said, the result instead would assure "the annihilation of much of the [Afghan] nation."⁹⁷

In December 1983, Harrison picked up the theme. Implying that the US Government supported a policy of "fighting to the last Afghan," he charged that the United States had not done enough "to further the faltering UN mediation effort."⁹⁸ Specifically, Harrison stated that "the United States should not stand in the way of a settlement."⁹⁹ Harrison argued that inducing the Soviets to withdraw,

notwithstanding the conditions they might impose, would represent a victory for the West and be a setback for the Soviets.

Critics of the Nathan-Harrison anti-"annihilation" view argued that the Afghans should determine whether or not they wished to resist the Soviet occupation. As long as the overwhelming majority of Afghans favored resistance, the free world should support them. As for the Harrison argument that the United States should support a UN-negotiated settlement—even if this meant accepting most Soviet conditions—the response was that the Soviet conditions were unrealistic. The Babrak government could not remain in power without a Soviet occupation force. The Soviets had declared they would not leave unless resistance to the Babrak regime ended; they demanded that the United States and Pakistan, among others, guarantee the end of the resistance. Since the resistance was indigenous, armed with mostly captured weapons, no foreign government could execute the demanded guarantees, even if given. Moreover, no democratic Western government could ever give a guarantee that could be interpreted by domestic public opinion as consolidating unwelcomed Soviet control over an occupied country.

DRA RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

DRA RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN

Ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan never have been close. Despite ethnic and religious affinities between the two peoples, relations often have been more strained than good. Before 1978, much of the difficulty stemmed from the fact that the British had demarcated a boundary with Afghanistan (popularly called the Durand Line*) that paid little attention to ethnic and tribal considerations; this boundary had divided the *Pushu*-speaking population between Afghanistan and British India.

After Pakistan became independent in 1947, and inherited the Durand Line boundary, Afghanistan promoted the cause of

*The boundary drawn in 1893, running through the tribal lands between Afghanistan and British territories; it now marks the boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The line is named for Sir Henry M. Durand, who induced Abdor Rahman Khan, amir of Afghanistan, to agree to a boundary.

Pushtunistan. This movement sought self-determination for the Pushtu peoples and the carving of a new *Pushtu*-speaking state out of Pakistani territory. Related to this issue was the Afghan stance that it did not recognize the Durand Line. The issues of Pushtunistan and the boundary never were totally resolved before the April 1978 Marxist coup in Afghanistan. However, in the months immediately before the coup, Afghan President Mohammad Daoud indicated to new Pakistan President Zia-ul Hak a willingness to shelve the Pushtunistan issue. He turned aside, however, Pakistan's request that Kabul recognize the Durand Line as the boundary.¹⁰⁰

After the coup, relations with Pakistan, much improved in the last months of Daoud's rule, again became cool. The Pakistanis viewed with alarm the Afghan regime's close ties and foreign policy alignment with the Soviet Union. In turn, the Taraki-Amin governments were upset by Pakistan's willingness to condone the presence of Afghan resistance groups on its soil, and to allow the flow of arms from these groups to guerrilla bands in Afghanistan.

The DRA's annoyance over Pakistan's cool attitude led the then DRA Foreign Minister Hafizullah Amin to propose to India in 1978 the dismemberment of Pakistan. Former Indian Foreign Minister Atar Bihari Vajpayee recalled that during a visit to Kabul, Amin told him: "let us have a secret pact; you take one part of Pakistan and we take the other part."¹⁰¹ A year later, however, Amin, as DRA President, tried to patch up relations with Pakistan as a counterpoise action to his deteriorating relations with the Soviet Union. But the Soviets invaded before much was accomplished.¹⁰²

BABRAK REGIME POLICIES After it was installed in power, the Babrak government extended an olive branch to Pakistan. Unlike its immediately declared hostility toward the United States, the DRA spoke of "the unbreakable brotherly ties between the two countries."¹⁰³ Eighteen of 23 Pakistani prisoners in Afghan jails were released.

The olive-branch policy continued to May 1980, when the DRA issued its first major foreign policy statement. That statement appealed to Pakistan to settle differences bilaterally, as follows:

The government of the DRA also proposes to the government of Pakistan the holding of Afghan-Pakistan negotiations with a view to working out bilateral agreements on the normalization of relations. Such agreements would contain generally acceptable principles concerning mutual respect for sovereignty, a

*readiness to develop relations on the basis of principles of good-neighborliness and non-interference in the internal affairs, and would also comprise concrete obligations on the non-admissibility of armed or any other hostile activity from its territory against the other.*¹⁰⁴

This offer was not accepted, because Pakistan did not fully recognize the Babrak government. Pakistan, however, was willing to explore a negotiated international settlement on Afghanistan, leading to a Soviet withdrawal. In this connection, Pakistan agreed, along with the DRA, to a UN formula for not-quite-face-to-face negotiations in Geneva under UN auspices.

As part of the effort to persuade Pakistan to recognize the DRA government, and prevent any assistance to Afghan resistance elements, the Kabul regime and the Soviets dropped hints that the DRA was prepared to recognize the Durand Line formally as Afghanistan's border. An example of this gambit was the following statement made by the DRA Foreign Ministry on 17 January 1981:

*There is no dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan or between Afghanistan and Iran. The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan has no territorial claims whatsoever against these countries.*¹⁰⁵

DRA criticism of Pakistan usually was in connection with Pakistan's alleged assistance to Afghan dissidents. DRA Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost complained to the UN General Assembly in October 1983 that "armed intervention against the DRA from Pakistani territory is the root cause of the Afghan problem."¹⁰⁶

The DRA often attempted to draw a distinction between its relations with the Pakistan government and those with the Pakistan people. Typical in this regard was the DRA's practice of referring to the Pakistan government as "reactionary circles" or "ruling circles" in Pakistan. In a major foreign policy statement in July 1981, DRA Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost stated that "our country expresses its solidarity with the fraternal people of Pakistan who are fighting for democracy and social progress."¹⁰⁷

Implying that the policy of the Pakistan government did not command broad Pakistani public support, President Babrak Karmal said on 21 March 1984 that "our brothers in Pakistan and Iran . . .

will eventually force their governments to review their present policies towards the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan."¹⁰⁸

PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD AFGHANISTAN

Pakistan's policy toward Afghanistan was similar to that of the United States and most Western countries toward Afghanistan; this policy was based on the four points contained in successive UN General Assembly resolutions. These points called for the immediate and total withdrawal of Soviet forces; independence and nonalignment for Afghanistan; self-determination for the Afghan people; and creation of political conditions necessary for the voluntary return of the Afghan refugees.¹⁰⁹

In its statements about the Kabul regime and about Soviet policy in Afghanistan, Pakistan avoided the vituperation practiced by Iran. "We do not seek indictments, we seek solutions," Pakistan Foreign Minister Yaqub-Khan explained before the UN in November 1983.¹¹⁰ Pakistan also was careful to deny Soviet accusations that it was supplying arms to Afghan insurgents. "We are not," Yaqub-Khan told the press on 23 May 1983.¹¹¹ Such foreign arms as were received by the resistance did not appear to come directly from Pakistani sources.

Pakistan also claimed to be committed to the diplomatic process to solve the Afghanistan problem. Said Yaqub-Khan: "we are convinced that there can be no military solution to the problem. The only possible solution should be a political one."¹¹²

Pakistan's views on Afghan self-determination seemed at times ambivalent or contradictory. Pakistan vigorously sponsored the annual UN General Assembly resolution on Afghanistan, calling for self-determination. But some Pakistan officials seemed willing to forego the principle in the interest of achieving a political settlement bringing a Soviet withdrawal. An American writer in 1983 quoted a key Pakistani Foreign Ministry official as hoping for a settlement that would "turn the clock back to early 1979 . . . like the situation that obtained before the Soviets came in, that is, a national communist setup."¹¹³

Like the United States and most Western countries, Pakistan did not fully recognize the Kabul regime. In Kabul, Pakistan headed its embassy with a charge d'affaires and reduced its staff; but its tiny consulates were maintained in Kandahar and Jalalabad.

The less-than-friendly attitude of the Pakistani government toward the Kabul regime was not endorsed by the disfranchised Pakistan People's Party (PPP); this party was led in 1972-77 by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the Pakistani Prime Minister who was executed. The party was presumed still to have a wide following in Pakistan. The PPP adopted a much different stance toward the DRA and the Soviet presence in Afghanistan than the Pakistan government of General Zia ul-Haq, declaring that "Pakistan must not interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan."¹¹⁴ Were the PPP to return to power, it declared that it would recognize fully the DRA government and prevent Afghan resistance elements from operating in Pakistan.¹¹⁵

This softer stance on Afghanistan seemingly was not shared by the Pakistani populace. Public opinion in Pakistan was sympathetic to the Afghan resistance and was strongly in favor of the *mujahidin* struggle.¹¹⁶

PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS One consequence of the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan was that it increased Islamabad's sense of vulnerability. Many Pakistanis believed that the Soviet action was part of a long-term strategy to gain access to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. They also feared Soviet designs on Baluchistan province, located in southern Pakistan and adjacent to Afghanistan, Iran, and the Indian Ocean. The possibility of Soviet-DRA assistance to Pakistani separatists and opposition elements also worried many Pakistanis, once the Soviets consolidated their position in Afghanistan.¹¹⁷

The Soviet Union's military and other ties with India, Pakistan's traditional enemy, further increased Pakistan's anxieties.

On many occasions, the Soviets tried to pressure Pakistan. Moscow repeatedly warned Islamabad that its continuing support of Afghan insurgents and its close ties with the United States would threaten Pakistan's security. In February 1980, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko warned publicly that Pakistan risked its independence by aiding the Afghan insurgents. In 1981, the Soviets reportedly warned Pakistan bluntly that Pakistan's policy of giving harbor and other alleged aid to the Afghan resistance would in time lead to war with Afghanistan. In the case of war, Moscow would support Kabul. On another occasion, in 1981, the Soviets reminded Pakistan that Soviet support for the Kabul regime was irreversible.

The Soviets also declared that the initiative lay with Pakistan to ease tensions by recognizing the DRA fully.

Apart from verbal threats, the Soviets also administered pressure against Pakistan by cross-border airspace violations. Although most such violations, including occasional bombings and strafing attacks, did not seem deliberate, some appeared to be so. Over the four years from 1980 to 1983, the Pakistanis tallied 407 airspace violations, as shown in table 13.¹¹⁸

Table 13
Soviet-DRA airspace violations

Year	Violations	Killed	Injured
1980	179	3	9
1981	98	7	24
1982	60	0	2
1983	70	3	9
1984	88	42 (Plus)	60 (Plus)

Pakistani officials were cognizant that the Soviets had the capability to increase military pressure on Pakistan. The Soviets would increase this pressure by mounting more frequent and more severe air strikes, or even troop raids against suspected insurgent bases close to the border.

Faced by Soviet threats, US support was crucial in Pakistan's view to resisting Soviet pressure. Many Pakistani officials viewed US military assistance—such as the 1981 \$3.2 billion economic and military aid and sales package—as necessary backing to Pakistan's Afghanistan policy. By a strengthened military capability, Pakistan believed it could mitigate Soviet pressure and deter Soviet attacks on Pakistan. Some critics alleged, however, that Pakistan's military defense posture did not reflect Pakistan's verbal concerns. As of 1984, Pakistan maintained only four understrength divisions facing Afghanistan, while it had an estimated 11 full-strength divisions on the Indian border.

Pakistan reportedly would have liked the United States to commit itself to Pakistan's security beyond the somewhat vague

assurances contained in the 1959 US Executive Agreement. That agreement included the following provision in Article 1:

*The Government of Pakistan is determined to resist aggression. In case of aggression against Pakistan, the United States Government in accordance with the Constitution of the United States will take such appropriate action, including the use of armed forces as may be mutually agreed upon and is envisioned in the joint resolution to promote peace and stability in the Middle East in order to assist the Government of Pakistan at its request.*¹¹⁹

As for Pakistan's other major military supporter, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Pakistan reportedly never was able to secure a Chinese commitment to defend Pakistan, despite the PRC's strong support otherwise.

DRA RELATIONS WITH IRAN

The Islamic Republic of Iran also did not fully recognize the Babrak government. Like other countries, Iran did not have an ambassador in Kabul, but did maintain a small embassy there. When Iran closed its one consulate, in Herat, in October 1984, it demanded the closure of the Afghan consulate in Meshed. Iran's policy toward the DRA is well exemplified by the following statement of the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs in late December 1984:

*As it has announced frequently, the Islamic Republic of Iran considers the unconditional departure of all the occupying forces without being replaced by any other oppressive force, giving the right of self rule to the people, and the honorable return of the Afghan refugees to their country as the only essential solution to the problem of Afghanistan.*¹²⁰

Major differences existed between Iran's and Pakistan's policies toward Afghanistan.

- For one difference, Iran's verbal criticisms of the Babrak regime and of the Soviet Union's presence in Afghanistan were vituperative, much more critical than Pakistan's public remarks. The Soviets were described as "satanic" and their armed intervention as a "flagrant violation of international law carried out in total disregard for

the sovereignty of Afghanistan."¹²¹ The resistance was described as a "sacred holy war."¹²²

- For another difference, Iran was the only country to go on record that it was prepared to recognize an Afghan government in exile if the resistance groups ever united. Mohammad Jafar Mahalati, Permanent Envoy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN in Geneva, stated on 23 June 1982:

*If such a government is put together, and authentically represents the struggling Muslim people of Afghanistan without ties to any superpower, it shall be recognized by my Government.*¹²³

- Also, Iran's objectives within Afghanistan sought to bolster the 20 percent *Shiite* element and introduce an anti-American stance. This feeling was revealed in a plan announced by Iranian Premier Hussain Musavi in October 1982, to establish an anti-American Islamic Afghanistan. The plan sought establishment of "a Union of Shia-Sunni Afghan Nationalities Republics." Most of the Afghan resistance showed no interest in the proposal.¹²⁴

Iran's policy, for most of 1980-84, was more bark than bite. In May 1980, Iranian Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh warned that if Soviet military activities against the Afghan rebels continued, "we have no choice but to help them with everything we have."¹²⁵

Yet, until about 1983 this was an empty threat. Iran carefully avoided giving military assistance to the Afghan resistance and limited use of Iranian territory by guerrilla groups as a safe haven. When armed Afghans crossed into Iran, Iranian border guards required them to turn in their weapons; these weapons were returned when the guerrillas went back to Afghanistan. Because the Iranians did not match their threats with deeds, the DRA and the Soviets did not violate Iranian airspace along the border, nor did the DRA launch any reprisal bombings against Afghan-inhabited hamlets located in Iran.

Iran also allowed several Afghan resistance groups to maintain offices in the country, and may have subsidized them. During most of 1980-84, Iran gave some non-military support to resistance groups within Afghanistan having a Shia Moslem character. Iran also may have given some financial support to one or more of the most fundamentalist Moslem resistance organizations in Peshawar. But this support occurred mostly before the Shah fell. By 1983, this non-

military aid phase of Iranian support to the Peshawar-based groups seems to have ended.

Sometime in late 1982 or early 1983, Iran sent emissaries to resistance-held areas in Afghanistan. These emissaries offered support to guerrillas who would commit themselves to follow the October 1982 anti-American Musavi plan. These terms of the Musavi plan were unacceptable to most of the guerrilla groups contacted, including that operated by Ahmed Shah Massoud in the Panjshir Valley.¹²⁶ At least one organization, *Al-Nasr*, however, accepted. *Al-Nasr* was a Shia Hazara ethnic group that controlled part of the Hazarajat region in central mountainous Afghanistan.

Many Afghan refugees were situated in Iran, in numbers second only to those in Pakistan. The total was 1.5 million in 1983, but this number included 850,000 Afghans who had been in Iran as migrant workers before the April 1978 coup and who chose not to return to Afghanistan. Iran claimed that Afghan refugees were given a "warm and brotherly welcome" including employment.¹²⁷ But an Afghan visiting London told a press conference that a mere 15,000 were getting help.¹²⁸ Iran would not permit the UN High Commission for Refugees to operate in the country.

DRA POLICY TOWARD IRAN In its first public statements on Iran, the Babrak government attempted to curry favor by praising Iran's anti-American stance and emphasizing how much the DRA shared those sentiments. This gambit did not have the desired effect.

Then, in the important 14 May 1980 statement that set forth conditions for a Soviet troop withdrawal, the Babrak government appealed to Iran to settle differences bilaterally.¹²⁹ Iran rejected this appeal, charging that the Babrak regime was an imposed government and not legitimate. Iran was not prepared to accord the Babrak regime full diplomatic recognition.

This policy of non-full recognition carried over into Iran's stance at the UN negotiations in Geneva. After the DRA agreed to drop its insistence on bilateral negotiations with Pakistan and Iran, the UN had hoped that Iran would take part in the trilateral talks under UN auspices. Claiming that the Afghan people were not properly represented, Iran refused to take part. But Iran did agree to be kept informed and appointed an observer for this purpose. During the UN negotiations from 1982 to 1984, Iran never disclosed publicly its

views on the proposed UN draft text. Whether it accepted or endorsed any part of it was never clear.

As the DRA had done with respect to Pakistan, it also sought to draw a distinction publicly between the government and the people of Iran. The DRA expressed great friendship toward the Iranian people. In July 1981, DRA Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost combined this theme with the DRA's effort to associate itself with Iran's anti-American position. He said:

*Our country expresses its solidarity . . . with the people of Iran defending their independence and sovereignty against the assaults of American imperialism which has still not abandoned its attempts to bring the Iranians to their knees.*¹³⁰

In January 1984, Babrak repeated the DRA's friendship-to-the-people theme by emphasizing the "fraternal historical relations between the Muslim peoples of Afghanistan and Iran."¹³¹

When in late 1982 or early 1983 the Iranians began to give credence to Ghotbzadeh's 1980 warning that Iran would help the resistance "with everything we have," the Babrak government took alarm. In January 1984, it publicly condemned the Iranian policy, ascribing it not to the Iranian people but to the "rulers of Iran," who were described as "provocative, interfering, and hostile." These Iranian "provocations and interventions," the DRA warned, would be publicized to the Afghan people and to the world.¹³² Afghanistan's conciliatory policy toward Iran apparently had failed.

RELATIONS WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

When the communists took power in China in 1949, they initially displayed no more interest in Afghanistan than had previous Chinese governments. Although the Afghan government was one of the first to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC), in January 1950, the PRC took five years to respond affirmatively (in 1954). In January 1955, full diplomatic relations finally were established between the PRC and Afghanistan. This recognition was followed in 1960 by the signing of a bilateral Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Nonaggression, modeled after the treaties the PRC had signed with Burma and Nepal.¹³³

Over the next two decades, before Afghanistan's 1978 Marxist coup, the most important bilateral development was the settlement of the short 74-kilometer (46 mile) boundary in the Wakhan Corridor between Afghanistan and China. The boundary line was not a contentious issue, and the border quickly was demarcated by a 1963 treaty. Chinese economic aid and trade soon followed, although neither ever reached high levels. In the 1956-79 period, Chinese aid totaled only \$75 million, compared with \$1.3 billion in Soviet aid from 1954 to 1979.¹³⁴

In trade, Afghanistan's exports to China in 1977 amounted to \$2.8 million and its imports were \$2.5 million. Each case was less than 1 percent of Afghanistan exports or imports.¹³⁵ As a whole, relations were tranquil.

DRA POLICY TOWARD THE PRC The period of bilateral tranquility and good neighborliness between the PRC and Afghanistan ended with the April 1978 Marxist coup. This deterioration in relations was particularly evident after the signing of the 1978 Afghan-Soviet treaty. The Chinese suspended their economic aid projects; the Taraki-Amin regimes soon accused the PRC of giving material aid to opposition elements.¹³⁶

After the Soviet invasion of 1979, Kabul increased its criticism of Beijing, undoubtedly on Soviet direction. In the view of the DRA, China shared with the United States the distinction of being one of Afghanistan's two greatest enemies. In DRA references to China, the phrase "Chinese hegemonism" commonly was used, a favorite Soviet-coined derogatory term. The standard DRA view of China was exemplified by a 1981 statement: "the forces of reaction in the region headed by US imperialism, in shameless collusion with Chinese hegemonism, are interfering in the internal affairs of our country."¹³⁷

In a speech before the UN General Assembly in November 1980, the DRA detailed its charges against the PRC as follows:

Hand in hand with the CIA the Chinese special services started to plot against the DRA right after the April Revolution. The Chinese agents were particularly active in the northern provinces of Afghanistan. They turned the 74-kilometer-long Chinese-Afghan border into a source of permanent tension and provocation against the DRA. Almost daily armed bandits

*accompanied by Chinese instructors cross the border, kill local people, loot their property, take their cattle and so on. . . . China is supplying rifles, grenade-launchers and antiaircraft missiles which are used by counterrevolutionary gangs.*¹³⁸

In late December 1983, when asked by an Italian journalist about the DRA's relations with the PRC, Foreign Minister Dost replied "at present, the Chinese stance toward us is not only not friendly, but hostile."¹³⁹

PRC POLICY While China's growing interest in South Asia and the Middle East had led it to establish a diplomatic presence in Kabul in 1955, the looming Soviet shadow in the region sharply focused that interest. As Beijing's relations with Moscow deteriorated, so did Beijing's concerns over the Soviet presence in Afghanistan grow.¹⁴⁰

After the 1978 coup, China became alarmed over the sudden increase in Soviet influence and presence in Afghanistan. A critical development in this regard was the signing of the Afghan-Soviet Treaty of Friendship in December 1978. In Beijing's view, Kabul had passed into the Soviet orbit. The time for opposing the regime had come. To China, the nascent and growing Afghan armed resistance represented a reaction not so much against the leftist regime as against the Soviets.¹⁴¹

When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, China strongly condemned the action and dismissed Soviet claims that they had been invited in. Commenting on the 1979 invasion, Beijing said:

*This clearly shows that Afghanistan is completely under Soviet influence. Not only are Afghanistan's internal, diplomatic, and military affairs under Soviet control but even the selection of government personnel.*¹⁴²

Like the United States, Pakistan, and other countries, the PRC refused to accord full diplomatic recognition to the Babrak government. The PRC, too, headed its Kabul embassy with a charge d'affaires.

In Beijing's eyes the Soviet invasion was part of a "southward policy."¹⁴³ The PRC explained its thinking, in June 1980, as follows:

*Situated south of Central Asia, Afghanistan is strategically very important. The old tsars drooled over it long ago. The new Soviet tsars have assumed the mantle from the old tsars. To get hold of the passage leading out of the Indian Ocean and to control the strategic sea route of the west and Japan, the Soviet Union is energetically trying to control Afghanistan to open a land route south to the Indian Ocean.*¹⁴⁴

China also saw Soviet strategy as one of encircling China. This strategy was given credence in the Chinese view by the Soviet administrative and military takeover of Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor, touching the Afghan-Chinese border. Commenting on the Wakhan Corridor takeover, Beijing said:

*Afghanistan is a neighbor of China. By invading Afghanistan and massing its troops along the Afghan-Chinese border, the Soviet Union is posing a grave threat to China's security.*¹⁴⁵

The proper response to the Soviet invasion, according to the Chinese, was firm rejection and resistance—not conciliation or compromise. In China's view, one had to be both firm and patient in opposing Moscow. Time was of the essence. As seen by Beijing, the Afghan crisis could be settled only by the following three steps:¹⁴⁶

- 1) Soviet troops should withdraw without preconditions or as part of any package deal.
- 2) Afghanistan's internal affairs should be settled by the Afghan people alone. No one should compel the Afghan people to accept the *fait accompli* achieved by the Soviet invasion.
- 3) All countries should firmly support the Afghan resistance against the Soviet occupation troops.

The PRC warned the Soviet Union that its withdrawal from Afghanistan also was one of several conditions necessary for overall improvement of Sino-Soviet relations. Other conditions were reduction in the number of Soviet divisions garrisoned along the Chinese border, withdrawal of troops from Mongolia to pre-1965 levels, and termination of Soviet support for Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia. Whether or not the PRC provided arms aid to Afghan resistance forces before the Soviet invasion, it may have done so after the invasion. According to several Western news accounts, the PRC

provided the *mujahidin* with Soviet-designed light weapons, mostly rifles, light machine guns, and mines.¹⁴⁷

In November 1982, the PRC declared that the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan constituted "a serious threat" to China's security.¹⁴⁸ The PRC called on other countries to give the resistance more support, including "moral and material assistance," to pressure the Soviets to withdraw.¹⁴⁹

DRA RELATIONS WITH INDIA

Among major non-communist countries, India was unique for its comparatively good relations with the Babrak government. India maintained full diplomatic relations with the regime, including a resident ambassador. In UN General Assembly voting on the Afghan question, India refused to condemn the Soviet Union and abstained on each of the six UN General Assembly votes during the years 1980-84. In May 1982, the Indo-Afghan Joint Economic Commission, dormant since the 1978 Marxist coup in Afghanistan, met in Kabul. At this meeting, India pledged economic aid to expand hospital facilities in the Afghan capital and to assist in developing small-scale industries.¹⁵⁰

The reasons for India's position appeared to be related both to its ties with the Soviet Union and its apprehensions of a militarily strong Pakistan. Perhaps because of these considerations, India adopted a unique historical interpretation of the Soviet invasion.

Maintaining good relations with the Soviet Union had been a cornerstone of Indian foreign policy for a decade. The symbolic basis of this stance was the 1971 Soviet-Indian Treaty of Friendship. Since signing that treaty, the Indian government has been careful to avoid criticism of the Soviet Union. In fact, many private Indians and opposition spokesmen charged that India's foreign policy was not even-handed in regard to the Soviet Union and the West. These spokesmen said that India's so-called "tilt" toward the Soviet Union never was more evident than in its Afghanistan policy.

India believed that Pakistan's motives for seeking arms aid from the United States, in the wake of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, were hypocritical. India suspected that Pakistan was using the Afghan crisis as an excuse to build up its armed strength vis-a-vis India. India also was concerned that the Afghan question

was introducing superpower confrontation in the region, to the detriment of India's security and its own aspirations for regional primacy.¹⁵¹

In viewing the events in Kabul, India adopted a singular historical interpretation not shared by most non-Indian and non-communist scholars. This interpretation had two parts: first, the reasons why the Soviets intervened militarily; and then, why they had not departed. India's Permanent Representative at the UN, Mr. B. C. Mishra, set forth the first part of the Indian explanation during the UN General Assembly debate on 11 January 1980. To the astonishment of his non-communist listeners, he put the primary responsibility for developments in Afghanistan on "the attempt by some outside powers to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan by training, arming, and encouraging subversive elements to create disturbances inside Afghanistan." He asserted that India had no reason to doubt the Soviet claim that its troops had moved into Afghanistan at the invitation of the Afghan government.¹⁵²

Most Western scholars took exception to this interpretation. While they agreed that some insurgents had received aid and encouragement from Afghan resistance organizations based in Pakistan, they also believed that most of the country-wide revolt in Afghanistan against the Taraki-Amin governments in 1978-79 was indigenous and that the insurgents had been armed largely with locally acquired weapons. Scholars also took exception to the Indian assertion that the Amin government had invited the Soviet forces to intervene. The Soviets never produced a single piece of evidence in support of such an invitation.

The second part of the Indian interpretation of history also was unique. India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi expressed it as follows:

*When the Soviet troops came they were welcomed, it was a cause for celebration. . . . At that time, if nothing else had happened, if there had not been any outcry, maybe having helped the government they wanted to have they would have gone away. I don't think they wanted to remain. . . . But I think the outcry and the feeling that everybody was ganging up on them caused them to dig in their toes.*¹⁵³

This interpretation of events was not borne out by the historical record. Released political prisoners and their families initially did welcome the change that brought them freedom from prison, and many Afghans welcomed the slightly more liberal economic measures the Babrak regime initially adopted. But the vast majority of Afghans were appalled by the Soviet invasion. No "welcoming" was evident, much less cheering of the Soviets. If anything, many Afghans who once had been prepared to work with a nationalist communist government now were not prepared to cooperate with a Soviet-puppet regime, even though it might be slightly more moderate than its predecessor. Mrs. Gandhi appeared naive when she stated that "if there had not been any outcry" by the Afghans and the world over the invasion, the Soviets "would have gone away."

In fairness to New Delhi, most Indians, including officials, viewed the Soviet military intervention with distaste. In bilateral meetings with the Soviets, Indian government officials pressed the Soviets to withdraw. In June 1980, Indian Foreign Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, during a visit to Moscow, requested the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan without waiting for the international guarantee that they were demanding.¹⁵⁴ In subsequent bilateral meetings over the next four years, India's leaders, from Mrs. Gandhi on, urged the Soviets to withdraw—but without success.

At the same time, India was critical of Pakistan and, by inference, the United States as well for not being more accommodating to Soviet conditions for withdrawal. India was convinced that a policy of armed confrontation with the DRA and the Soviets was unlikely to succeed; India felt that a policy of conciliation and consultation was the only viable alternative.¹⁵⁵

In September 1981, before the first round of UN negotiations took place in Geneva, Mrs. Gandhi accused Pakistan of deliberately blocking an agreement. She said,

I think that Pakistan does not want a solution. . . . They are taking the fullest possible advantage of it [the Soviet occupation] in every way.¹⁵⁶

Mrs. Gandhi was alluding to Pakistan's success in getting US and Saudi Arabian economic and arms aid.

The Indian theme that Pakistan and other countries were contributing to the difficulty of settling the Afghanistan problem continued through 1983. In September 1982, Mrs. Gandhi accused unidentified nations of making a Soviet withdrawal difficult by giving aid to Afghan resistance forces. She said:

*We have expressed our view that we would like the Soviet troops to leave because we are against any type of interference. But, as I've said on many occasions, the problem has to be seen in its totality. There are two sides to the question. There is interference in Afghanistan's affairs.*¹⁵⁷

DRA ATTITUDE TOWARD INDIA The DRA was delighted that India shared the Soviet Union's views about the cause of the Soviet intervention and that India condemned foreign arms aid to the mujahidin.

On 23 January 1980, India's Minister of External Affairs, P.V. Narasimha Rao, declared before the Indian *Lok Sabha** that "India has close and friendly relations with the government and people of Afghanistan."¹⁵⁸ This statement must have sounded like sweet music to the DRA. A month later, DRA Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost replied in kind: "regarding India, we say that we have good relations with it."¹⁵⁹

To a correspondent, Foreign Minister Dost said "this country [India] showed great understanding for the revolution in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan as well as for the situation in Afghanistan and the region."¹⁶⁰



HE SEARCH FOR A DIPLOMATIC SETTLEMENT THAT would lead to the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan failed. The Soviets seemed determined to maintain their presence and to keep a compliant puppet government in Kabul. Though the Soviets repeatedly stated that they welcomed UN efforts to bring about a settlement, their terms in essence called for international recognition

*House of the People, one of the two chambers of the Indian Parliament, the other is the Council of States (*Rajya Sabha*).

of the Soviet Union's hegemony over the country. Soviet pacification of Afghanistan was proceeding poorly and had cost the USSR perhaps \$16 billion and 24,000 casualties through 1984; but the cost was seen as bearable and probably was perceived as more than offset by advantages gained. The most important advantage was the extension of Soviet power south toward the Middle East and the South Asian subcontinent. If Afghanistan could be pacified, the Soviet Union would be able to wield enormous diplomatic and military leverage in an unstable region. Implications of this trend must have been mouth-watering for Moscow.

During 1980-84, and into 1985, the Kabul regime failed to achieve its two primary foreign policy objectives—to gain diplomatic recognition from most of the world community of nations; and to persuade its neighbors and others to cease giving aid to the Afghan opposition. The major stumbling block to achieving these ends was the fact that most of the world community considered the Kabul regime illegitimate—a puppet government established by and run by the Soviets. This feeling, that the regime was not truly independent, was no better illustrated than in the way the Soviets controlled the Afghan Foreign Ministry. Important foreign policy statements were drafted by the Soviets; Afghan diplomatic posts abroad often were controlled by Soviet diplomats.

The DRA's bilateral relations with the non-Soviet-bloc world were limited and strained. The most conspicuous exception was its relations with India—the only democratic government in the world to describe its relations with the DRA as "good." Relations between the DRA and the United States, while they had not been severed, were bad—and had been bad from the start of the Soviet occupation. The DRA viewed the United States and China (PRC) as its principal enemies and charged them with carrying on an "undeclared war" against Afghanistan. The United States maintained a small staff at its Kabul embassy; life for its staff members in the Afghan capital was restricted and often unpleasant.

In his 1984 New Year's Day address, Babrak Karmal said "we are on the side of the forces of peace and progress, headed by the Soviet Union."¹⁶¹ However, neither peace nor progress was shown in Afghanistan. The DRA's relationship with the Soviet Union was the root cause of the problem.

Conclusion and Outlook

Current joke in Moscow:

Question: "Why are we still in Afghanistan?"

Answer: "Because we're still looking for the people who invited us in."

—Louis Dupree, *Asian Survey*, February 1983

CONCLUSION

IN 1981, MEMBERS OF THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE obtained a copy of a 60-year-old Soviet diplomatic note addressed to the Afghan Foreign Ministry. This note was written on 10 February 1922 in reply to the Afghan protest over the entry of Soviet troops into the neighboring Central Asian protectorates of Khiva and Bokhara. The Afghan-Soviet friendship treaties of 1920 and 1921 had stipulated that the USSR recognized the independence of these states. The Soviet Ambassador stated in the note:

Concerning the question of the independent status of Khiva and Bokhara, this has been provided for in the treaty agreed to and signed by the two Governments of Russia and Afghanistan. The Government which I represent has always recognized and respected the independence of the two Governments of Khiva and Bokhara. The presence of a limited contingent of troops belonging to my Government is due to temporary requirements expressed and made known to us by the Bokharan Government. This arrangement has been agreed to within the provision that whenever the Bokharan Government so requests, not a single Russian soldier will remain on Bokharan soil. The extension of our friendly assistance in no way constitutes an interference

*against the independence of the sovereign State of Bokhara. If the Government of Bokhara should cease to formulate its request and should prove dissatisfied with the continuation of such brotherly assistance, then the Government I represent shall most immediately withdraw its troops.*¹

Two years later, in 1924, the USSR annexed the states of Khiva and Bokhara and partitioned their territories among three present-day Soviet Republics.

In 1981, in connection with Afghanistan, the Report of the Central Committee, 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, stated:

*We are compelled to render military aid requested by a friendly country As for the limited Soviet military contingent, we will be prepared to withdraw it with the agreement of the Afghan Government."*²

The similarity between the 1922 note and recent Soviet statements justifying their presence in Afghanistan raises the question of whether this earlier episode represents a foretaste of Soviet intentions in Afghanistan. The answer is: not necessarily. While the duplicity suggested by the 1922 note may have parallels in present Soviet diplomacy, Afghanistan has never been an area "protected" or claimed by the Tsars or Soviets. Khiva and Bokhara had in reality lost their sovereignty to Tsarist Russia in the nineteenth century; they were protectorates of Russia. Neither Khiva nor Bokhara maintained diplomatic relations with other states, nor did most nations consider the two countries truly independent.

Afghanistan, on the other hand, had been totally independent since 1919 (when the British returned control of foreign affairs); and until the Soviet intervention of late December 1979, Afghanistan enjoyed diplomatic relations with most nations of the world. One of the Soviet Union's foreign policy objectives has been to gain full diplomatic recognition for its client Kabul regime as a bona fide independent nation—not the contrary.

The 1922 note nonetheless is disturbing. Since the Soviets did not honor the promises of their treaties and their 1922 note, the question arises whether they now will behave more responsibly toward Afghanistan. One cannot help noting that once Soviet troops

occupied Asian territory contiguous to the Soviet Union, including Mongolia, they did not leave unless pressured internationally to do so, as in Iran in 1946.

THE SOVIET POSITION The Soviets justify their presence in Afghanistan on the grounds that their limited contingent was invited there by the government in power. Yet the Soviets never have presented any evidence of a pre-invasion Afghan request. Moreover, their assertion is inconsistent with the fact that Soviet troops seized Kabul, killed the head of the host government, Hafizullah Amin, and installed in his place a more compliant Afghan Marxist, Babrak Karmal, who had been living in exile in Prague.³ No consideration was given to any principle of self-determination by the Afghan people.

The Soviets insist that they will leave Afghanistan only with the agreement of Kabul's government—an unlikely eventuality, since the regime was installed by the Soviets and cannot survive without the protection of the Red Army. The central element of Soviet-DRA conditions for a political settlement, under UN auspices, is the cessation of "foreign interference"; this element implies that the insurgency is a foreign-inspired creation. The Soviets also emphasize the need for international guarantees for noninterference. In effect, they demand that the international community guarantee the survival of the Babrak Karmal regime as a precondition to a Soviet withdrawal.

WHY DID THE SOVIETS INTERVENE? The major reason that the Soviets intervened was to save and reshape a tottering and increasingly undependable Marxist government closely identified with the Soviet Union. Other imperatives were to remind pro-Moscow Marxist governments adjacent to the USSR not to veer from the Soviet orbit (Brezhnev doctrine); and to secure geopolitical opportunities to project Moscow's power in the region. Ultimately, the Soviets appeared to have in mind establishing another Mongolia or Bulgaria—not a Finland or Austria.

In taking the step of intervention, the Soviets probably calculated that the Afghan public would be so awed by the visible military presence of a superpower—and so relieved to be rid of the inept and brutal Amin regime—that the Afghans resignedly would accept the new turn of affairs. The Soviets also may have been influenced by the consideration that the countries of Eastern Europe had acquiesced to Soviet dominance after World War II.

Instead, the Afghans resisted—and have continued to resist into 1986. The ferocity and pervasiveness of resistance must have come as a surprise to the Kremlin, particularly since its installed regime, headed by Babrak Karmal, was depicted to the Afghan public as a more moderate and humane government than its predecessor. However, unlike the better educated and more affluent citizens of the Eastern European states, the largely illiterate and poor Afghans refused to submit or be cowed. In fact, the resistance movement that had begun before the Soviet invasion proceeded to grow, and spread to all of Afghanistan's 29 provinces.

THE RECORD OF SOVIET OCCUPATION The Soviet intervention has left a searing mark on Afghanistan. This mark is reminiscent of the traumatic Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century, which permanently changed the Afghan landscape and society. Soviet policies indicate a willingness to use extermination, terrorism, and cultural genocide to achieve the goal of pacifying the country and molding its people into compliant Soviet subjects. Probably three-quarters of the country's towns and villages have been badly damaged or destroyed. According to the admission of DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) Prime Minister Sultan Ali Keshtmand in 1983, half of the country's schools and hospitals have been destroyed. Well over 3.5 million Afghans are in exile, representing more than 20 percent of the pre-war population. The number of Afghans killed in the fighting, mostly civilians, probably is more than 300,000 out of a pre-1978 population of 16 million.

During the first five years of occupation, the Soviets gradually increased their troops in Afghanistan from about 80,000 to about 115,000 in 1984. But even with this large Soviet military presence, the Soviets neither were able to suppress the resistance nor create an effective DRA army and expand the authority of the Babrak government. By the end of 1984, about 80 percent of the country was in *mujahidin* (resistance) hands. As one Western correspondent noted, Afghanistan essentially was an example of "socialism in one town (Kabul)."⁴

While the *mujahidin* were not strong enough to prevent determined Soviet military sorties into resistance-held territory, the Soviets on their part were unwilling to commit enough forces to Afghanistan to hold the areas they swept. When Soviet-DRA search-and-destroy missions returned to their bases, the swept areas reverted

to the resistance; villages, farm areas, and towns often were ruthlessly damaged.

Many military analysts consider that a dominant ratio of 10-to-1 is needed to crush an insurgency, but in Afghanistan the ratio was somewhere between 1-to-1 and 3-to-1. The Soviets and DRA had on their side about 200,000 military and para-military forces: 115,000 Soviet troops; 35,000 to 50,000 unreliable DRA troops; and perhaps 50,000 DRA militia, KHAD secret police, regular police, and other auxiliaries. On the *mujahidin* side, the number of more or less full-time combatants perhaps was 40,000 to 50,000, with possibly another 100,000 available on a part-time basis.

One military analyst estimated that to pacify Afghanistan, the Soviets minimally would need to triple the number of their troops there, to 345,000 men.⁵ So far, the Soviets have been willing to increase their forces by only small annual increments.

The Soviets have given no explanation to why they have been reluctant to commit sufficient forces to obliterate the resistance. Western analysts speculate, however, that for domestic political purposes, the Soviets wish to keep up the myth of maintaining a "limited contingent" in Afghanistan, for fear that a much larger force there, and more casualties, might provoke domestic political unrest. Another explanation is that the Soviets are paranoid about maintaining their military force strength facing Western Europe and the People's Republic of China, and do not wish to weaken their forces on those fronts. Other reasons are that the Soviet logistical infrastructure presently is incapable of supporting a much larger Soviet force in Afghanistan, and that the Soviets do not wish to invite higher levels of international criticism.

An important Soviet newspaper, *Krasnaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*), in January 1984 made the point that the Soviet Union is counting on time to reconcile the Afghan populace to Sovietization. The publication stated:

*Time always has been, is, and remains the best medicine. Even against political ailments. It removes the shroud of deceit and misconceptions, opening the eyes of more and more new people in Afghanistan.*⁶

Assuming that time is on their side, the Soviets have fashioned a set of military and civil policies aimed at pacifying the country and turning it into a Soviet satellite, as follows:

- Militarily, the Soviets have established a string of Soviet-garrisoned enclaves along the major paved highways that connect the Soviet Union with Kabul, Kandahar, and Herat—not unlike a necklace of spaced beads. From these enclaves the Soviets hope to widen their rings of control through pacification techniques.

- Another pacification technique is a “scorched earth” policy. This policy seeks to demolish the rural support base of the resistance—to destroy *mujahidin*-sympathizing villages, their crops, irrigation works, and livestock, and to drive the population to Pakistan, Iran, or to Soviet-controlled urban centers in Afghanistan.

- On the civil side, the Soviets follow a carrot-and-stick policy, offering monetary inducements and other rewards to Afghans in urban and adjacent rural areas who will cooperate, while threatening severe reprisals for non-cooperation.

Underlining all these policies is a public front of Soviet invincibility and immutability of policy.

Central to the success of Soviet policy is development of a more effective DRA army and a more competent DRA civil administration. Neither development took place during the first five years of Soviet occupation. A major inhibiting factor was the continuing bitter rivalry between the two Afghan communist party (PDPA) (Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan) factions, the ruling *Parcham* and the deposed but majority *Khalq*. While most Afghans had little use for either faction, and only a fraction of 1 percent of the population belonged to the PDPA, many viewed the Parchamis as quislings (traitors) who had sold their souls to the Soviets, and the Khalqis as nationalist communists. The fact that the factions were in large part based on ethnic lines—the *Parcham* consisting largely of *Dari* (Persian) speakers, and the *Khalq* of *Pushtu* speakers—made the likelihood of reconciliation remote.

A major pillar of Soviet policy, designed to mold the country into a permanent compliant satellite, was to train and educate Afghans in the USSR. In 1983, the number of Afghans being trained in the Soviet Union was at least 10,000, representing the largest group of foreign students and trainees in the USSR. The Soviets apparently are counting on this Soviet-trained element eventually to take over much of the civil and military administration of the country.

The Soviets also probably hoped that the new Soviet-trained elite would be submissive and harbor a grateful and admiring view of

the Soviet Union. This hope did not, however, seem to come true in many cases. Afghan returnees often were disillusioned by their exposure to Soviet society and unhappy over the police-state treatment they received in the Soviet Union. Few welcomed the prospect of being colonial subjects.

OUTLOOK



TWO POSSIBILITIES EXIST FOR AFGHANISTAN'S FUTURE. One possibility is becoming a satellite within the Soviet empire, with a position not unlike that of Mongolia. The other possibility is Soviet withdrawal and a return of the country to a political status akin to pre-intervention independence.

Clearly, the former possibility is the objective of the Soviet Union. Since their intervention, the Soviets have not deviated from their position that the changed situation in Afghanistan is "irreversible." The Soviet intent to keep Afghanistan within the Soviet bloc is illustrated by the following comment of a Soviet general officer in Afghanistan to a Soviet correspondent:

Years will pass, and I—an old and grey-haired man by that time—will go with my grandchildren to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan on a tourist pass.⁷

Analysts have cited the following reasons why any significant change in Soviet attitude will be difficult:

- Substantial commitment of Soviet prestige and resources to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.
- Soviet geopolitical power projection benefits from eventual consolidation of Soviet control.
- Absence so far of much Soviet domestic opposition to the war.
- Soviet bureaucratic imperative of never admitting to mistakes.
- Benefits to the Soviet military of combat experience and equipment testing.
- Uncertain attitude toward the Soviet Union of any future Afghan government, should the Soviets withdraw.

Since the advantages to remaining in Afghanistan probably are perceived by the Kremlin as very substantial, the best prospect for compelling a withdrawal would seem to be to raise the costs (militarily, politically, and diplomatically) for the Soviets to the point that they will welcome a means to withdraw. Soviet withdrawal will ensue only if the following happen:

- Increased pressure from the *mujahidin* and the world community.
- Continued manpower and monetary bleeding in the long term, from the present levels of Soviet military casualties (4,000 to 5,000 annually) and economic costs (\$4 to \$6 billion annually).

A difference of opinion exists among analysts and scholars on whether the costs, even in the long term, are likely to be high enough to induce a Soviet withdrawal. Since the Soviet Union is a superpower with considerable manpower and economic resources, not a few observers conclude that the chances of successfully pressuring the Soviets to withdraw are low.

The reasons against withdrawal include those listed above, plus others. Soviet scorched-earth strategy, designed to depopulate resistance-held areas and deprive the guerrillas of their economic and manpower bases, has had some success. The *mujahidin* are unlikely to grow into a military force strong enough to drive the Red Army off Afghan soil. Moreover, the resistance movement is fragmented; no Afghan resistance figure commands the allegiance of most Afghans and no Afghan government-in-exile exists. By late 1983, many Afghans in Kabul seemed to have resigned themselves to the Soviet presence, although latent hostility toward the Soviets lay just beneath the surface.⁹ Also, in some rural areas the population no longer was cooperating willingly with the *mujahidin* for fear of Soviet reprisals. Finally, the Soviets seemed willing, if necessary, to escalate modestly the number of their forces in Afghanistan; the total had climbed to about 115,000 in 1984. Economically, the Soviets had the resources to sustain both their forces in Afghanistan and the puppet regime, although analysts detected some strains on the Soviet economy.

A MORE OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK The other view, to which this writer adheres, is that instead of time being on the side of the Soviets, time may be on the side of the resistance movement. While the resistance now has no possibility of militarily driving out the Soviets,

the resistance may be able to weary the Soviets into reaching some kind of accommodation arrangement—and leaving Afghanistan. For this event to happen, however, continued international diplomatic, humanitarian, and material support to the resistance is needed.

Certainly, resistance fighters appreciate that their best hope lies in wearing out the Soviets over the long term. An aide to Afghan guerrilla commander Ahmed Shah Massoud stated to a Paris newspaper in 1984: "what we are seeking above all is to make this occupation as costly as possible for the occupier, not only in the (Panjshir) Valley but throughout the region."¹⁰

HIGH AFGHAN MORALE Some evidence exists in support of this more optimistic outlook. One sign is the continued and surprisingly high morale of the resistance movement inside Afghanistan. Visitors to *mujahidin*-held areas often have commented on how morale and optimism among the fighters seem to be high—in fact, higher than among Afghans and foreign observers outside the country. Even Soviet soldiers have commented on the extraordinarily high morale of the resistance. In June 1983, an Estonian underground newspaper carried a report of an interview with a recently returned Estonian soldier from the Afghan war; part of this report follows:

Question: Will the Afghans win? Do they have a chance?

Answer: They have a remarkably strong will that can hardly be broken. The opposition (to the Soviets) will continue until all Afghans are destroyed. This is why the war in Afghanistan is so bloody.¹¹

Immediately after the Soviet invasion, a resistance spokesman stated that "history proves that the Afghan people have the will, the stamina, and the know-how to defeat foreign invaders." This spokesman was expressing a very significant psychological feature of the resistance. In the last several centuries, would-be invaders, especially the Persians and the British, while winning temporary victories, were not able to establish a permanent presence in Afghanistan. This history has led to a general Afghan belief in their own invincibility. Afghans believe that history is on their side . . . and that the Afghan people never have been conquered.¹² Despite some evidence of a weakening of determination in a few towns and exposed villages, the spirit to resist remained overall as strong into 1985 as it was at the time of the intervention.

AFGHAN FIGHTING SKILLS Another positive sign is that the *mujahidin* have become better armed and increasingly more proficient at guerrilla warfare. Though the resistance fighters lack artillery and tanks, these weapons are not essential for guerrilla warfare. The *mujahidin* do have rifles, machine guns, mines, and more effective missiles—though not enough. And the *mujahidin* have become increasingly formidable fighters, able to decimate convoys, blow up bridges, destroy armored vehicles, and occasionally shoot down Soviet aircraft. The flow of arms reaching the resistance, whether from captured supplies or from foreign sources, has continued. The number of *mujahidin* displaying guerrilla-warfare training also was more evident, while the supply of recruits seemed undiminished.

Though disunity characterized the resistance movement, the leading guerrilla commanders inside Afghanistan—rather than resistance figures outside—gradually were assuming the mantle of national leadership. As time passes, the most successful of these may well emerge de facto as leaders of an alternative government.

EVIDENCE OF THE WAR'S UNPOPULARITY IN THE USSR As for political pressures in the Soviet Union for a change in policy, evidence suggests that these pressures are at present manageable by the Kremlin. A *New York Times* correspondent reported in December 1984 that from his conversations with a sampling of Soviets in Moscow, the war did not appear unpopular.¹³ Evidence, too, exists of young Soviet men volunteering to serve in Afghanistan; and some Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan have reenlisted.

On the other hand, Soviet deserters and POWs declare that the average Soviet citizen is indifferent to and certainly ignorant about the true nature of the Soviet-Afghan war. Some former Soviet soldiers also state that some Soviet citizens view the war with misgivings, despite distortions in the Soviet press and the veil of secrecy over the extent of Soviet involvement in Afghanistan.

Afghan students returning from the USSR go even further to state that they found the war unpopular among many Soviet citizens. One of the surprises of the Afghan war has been the hostility of the Soviet population to Afghan students—to the point that many Afghan students tried to pass themselves off as belonging to some other nationality.



Photo courtesy Committee for a Free Afghanistan

Mujahidin guerrillas display their captured arms

Another surprise, unexpected by Western military analysts, has been the low morale and ineffectiveness of the common Soviet soldier. These problems seem to stem from the following:

- Belonging to an oppressive Soviet society, where the government is disliked.
- Frequently strained relations between Soviet officers and enlisted men.
- Misrepresented Soviet objectives.

For all these reasons, common Soviet soldiers found it difficult to support the war with their lives. Soldiers posted to Afghanistan continued to be told, through 1984, that they would be opposing American and Chinese mercenaries and Afghan "counterrevolutionaries," whose presence was being resisted by the Afghan populace and whose activities threatened the security of the Soviet Union. Soviet soldiers arriving in Afghanistan were led to believe that they would be welcomed by a grateful Afghan nation to help expel these

foreigners and "bandits." When no foreigners were encountered, and when the Soviet soldiers came to sense the hostility of the local population, disillusionment set in.

A former Soviet POW, Sergei Busov, described the low morale as follows:

*The morale among the Soviet soldiers is, of course, not good. The longer the war drags on the more (the soldiers) tend to ask themselves the question: why are we here? Soviet soldiers realize that they're not there to defend Afghanistan against mercenaries but to keep Babrak Karmal in power. They know that if they weren't there, Karmal wouldn't remain in power more than two days.*¹⁴

Under these circumstances, how long can the Soviets sustain a military struggle of this kind without incurring domestic unrest in the Soviet Union, especially if the annual toll of Soviet casualties continues at the present level year after year? How can they explain publicly the growing number of wounded Soviet veterans, while at the same time trying to hide the combat role of Soviet forces in Afghanistan?¹⁵

At present, the Soviets are experiencing 4,000 to 5,000 soldiers killed and wounded per year, for an estimated total of 20,000-25,000 casualties through 1984.¹⁶ Can this rate of loss be sustained politically for another 10 or 15 years, or longer? Many analysts doubt it, despite the Kremlin's clamp of secrecy over the Soviet media and strictures on Soviet veterans never to reveal their experiences in Afghanistan. By 1984 possibly more than 400,000 Soviet soldiers had been rotated through Afghanistan. As more and more Soviet families learn of kin or friends who have died or suffered wounds in the Afghan war, or who hear of the determined Afghan resistance to the occupation, domestic pressures are certain to grow to change Soviet policy.

Some Soviet citizens are daring to speak out against the war. The best known Soviet dissident, Andrei Sakharov, was the first Soviet to protest and condemn the Soviet intervention publicly, on 17 January 1980. Other dissidents subsequently have made similar statements. Periodically, also, anti-war sentiment has surfaced in the underground (*samizdat*) press. *Samizdat* criticism has been particularly

noted among the Baltic peoples, and more recently among Central Asians, who find parallels between the Soviet occupation of their formerly independent states and the intervention in Afghanistan.¹⁷

Finally, the world community has not forgotten Afghanistan's plight. Annually, through 1984, the UN General Assembly has adopted resolutions requesting a Soviet withdrawal and the application of political self-determination for Afghanistan—and the majorities voting for these resolutions have been growing. The American and Western European press regularly publicizes the struggle. The flow of humanitarian and material aid to the resistance from abroad is not diminishing, and is likely to continue.

THE STAKES FOR THE FREE WORLD If the Soviets succeed in consolidating their hold over Afghanistan, they will gain immense opportunities for supporting subversion in neighboring states, and for projecting Soviet political and military power in the region. For the West, the continued resistance of the *mujahidin* limits these opportunities. The Afghans are serving well the interests of the free world.

In early 1984, a Radio Liberty (Munich) correspondent visited Peshawar and interviewed six former Soviet soldiers. One of them, Vladislav Naumov, a marine engineering college graduate, accepted an invitation to send a message via Radio Liberty to the Soviet Union. His message to the Soviet people included the following:¹⁸

If you have to come to Afghanistan, don't forget one thing—it is impossible to make war on an entire people.

(To) mothers whose sons have fallen or are missing in the mountains . . . raise your head (and) tell as much as you can about the unjust war.

In April 1982, Salim, a guerrilla commander from Kabul province, predicted to a French interviewer that "it will take 10 or 15 years before Afghanistan is freed."¹⁹ It may take that long or more. And the commander also may prove accurate in his conviction that eventually Afghanistan will be free.

Appendix A

Eight Additional Leaders of the DRA Government

1. SHAH MOHAMMED DOST, DRA MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NOT A MEMBER OF THE PDPA (PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC Party of Afghanistan) Politburo or Presidium, though still a member of the large PDPA Central Committee), Shah Mohammed Dost, DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) Minister of Foreign Affairs, nonetheless was one of the most visible DRA leaders. During the Taraki-Amin period, he held the portfolio of Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs; thereafter, 1980-85, under President Babrak Karmal, Dost was Foreign Minister. A long-time clandestine *Parcham* member, Dost had close links with Babrak from student days.

Born in 1929 into a poor, lower-class family in the Shomali area near Kabul, Dost was a Tajik and *Dari*-speaker by family background. Educated at Habibia High School in Kabul and then at the Faculty of Law at Kabul University, he was not a brilliant student at school. Nevertheless, in 1956 he joined the Foreign Ministry as an officer at a time when entrance examinations were not used. He was recruited to that ministry by Foreign Minister Ali Mohammad Khan. (Despite Khan's then conservative reputation, some Afghan emigres now suspect that he was an undercover KGB agent. They suspect this because of his long-time intimate liaison with a Russian woman.

popularly known as "Khanum." On her death, "Khanum" was eulogized by the Soviet Embassy.)¹

In the Foreign Ministry, Dost advanced faster than average. Initially, he was assigned to the Ministry's Archives Department. Soon afterward, in 1956, he went to New York on a UN fellowship to study the functioning of the UN Secretariat. Returning to Kabul in 1957, he joined the ministry's United Nations Department. He served only briefly there, because from 1958 to 1964 he was back in the United States as Second Secretary in the Afghan Embassy in Washington, D.C. On his return to Kabul, Dost was assigned to the Protocol Department.²

While working in the Protocol Department, Dost was picked, in 1965, by his former ambassador in Washington, M. H. Maiwandwal, to move to the Prime Minister's office. Maiwandwal had been appointed by King Zahir Shah to become Prime Minister. Maiwandwal asked Dost to become his personal secretary, an important position, also described as head of the Prime Minister's office. A former Foreign Ministry officer recalls that when Maiwandwal was announced as Prime Minister, Dost, in one of his rare expressions of opinion, privately condemned Maiwandwal as an "imperialist." This did not deter Dost from accepting, a few days later, Maiwandwal's invitation to take the prestigious post of personal secretary. When Maiwandwal was replaced as Prime Minister (1965-67) by Nur Ahmed Etemadi (1967-71), the latter kept Dost on as his personal secretary for a time.³

In 1970, Dost was appointed to the Afghan Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, as First Secretary; in 1972 he was transferred to Peshawar as Afghan Consul. Sometime in the mid-1970s he was recalled to Kabul and suspended from active service because of his suspected clandestine ties with the PDPA.⁴

When Dost became a closet *Parcham* communist is not clear. During his university student days, he was a close friend of Babrak Karmal—and Babrak may have drawn him into the party because of this friendship. Though no KGB link to Dost has been unearthed, as it has with Babrak Karmal, the KGB also may have recruited Dost at the university or via Foreign Minister Ali Mohammad Khan. One former Foreign Ministry officer colleague wonders if the Soviet KGB recruited Dost during his Washington tour in the 1960s.⁵



AP Wide World Photo

SHAH MOHAMMED DOST, DRA Minister of Foreign Affairs

Knowledgeable Afghan emigres, and especially those who served with Dost in the Foreign Ministry, hold him in low esteem. They describe him as a "Soviet stooge," a "man of no importance in the Babrak government," and a man "without a mind of his own."⁶

Western diplomats, including this author, who had dealings with Dost found him earnest but diffident and reserved. He spoke English well (but no other European language) and knew *Pushtu* and some *Urdu*. He always was courteous to official visitors.

Dost is married to an educated woman who spoke some English. They are believed to have children.

2. MAJOR SAYED MOHAMMED GULABZOY, DRA MINISTER OF INTERIOR

Labeled a Khalqi, Major Sayed Mohammed Gulabzoy, DRA Minister of Interior, was among those who turned against President Hafizullah Amin in September 1979 and took asylum in the Soviet Embassy.

Born in Paktia province in 1951, Gulabzoy was a former aircraft mechanic. Though he claimed to have graduated from the Air Force College, some who knew him considered him barely literate. As a military officer, he was active in supporting Daoud's 1973 coup and was rewarded by appointment as aide to the Air Force Commander. In 1976 he studied radar technology in the Soviet Union. In April 1978 he was the first person Hafizullah Amin contacted to trigger the leftist coup. After its success, he initially was appointed aide to President Taraki; then in July 1978 he was named Minister of Communications.⁷

After the Soviet invasion in December 1979, Gulabzoy became Minister of Interior, as well as a member of the PDPA Central Committee and the Revolutionary Council. He was not given a position in the Politburo, probably because the Parchamis did not trust him. During the March 1982 PDPA Conference, Gulabzoy achieved some prominence by having interrupted Babrak's main speech to protest allegations that the Khalqis were not fully loyal or cooperative with the government. According to one news account, Gulabzoy subsequently was offered an ambassadorial post, presumably as a means to ease him out of Kabul, but he refused.⁸

He reportedly once rejected the assignment of a Parchami to a high position in his ministry. Some Afghan emigres considered Gulabzoy, among top Khalqi faction leaders, to be the least well disposed toward the Parchamis. He has been described as "stubborn" and resentful of the second-class position of Khalqis in the Babrak regime. Little is known about Gulabzoy's personal life.

Gulabzoy's ministry was important because it controlled the 30,000-member police force and administration of the provinces. Shortly after the Soviet takeover, the Rural Development Administration, which had been attached to the Interior Ministry, was transferred elsewhere. The secret police, KHAD, was not under Gulabzoy's ministry, but reported directly to Babrak Karimal.

3. NUR AHMAD NUR, POLITBURO MEMBER

During 1980-83, some foreign observers considered Nur Ahmad Nur, Politburo member, the second or third most important Parchami after Babrak Karmal, although Nur did not hold any ministerial position. Nur's high ranking would seem to be belied by Nur's presumed demotion in January 1984.

Nur was born in Kandahar in 1937 of a prominent land-owning family. After schooling at Habibia High School, Kabul, he attended Kabul University, where he earned mediocre grades. Graduating in 1961 with a degree in international relations, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but was given an unprestigious job in archives. In 1965 he left the ministry to stand successfully for parliament from a constituency near Kandahar, where his family long had been prominent. He did not represent himself in that election as a PDPA member nor as a left-wing radical—and was elected because of his family's standing. He later was revealed to be one of three PDPA members to be elected.⁹

An early member of the PDPA, Nur became a full member of the Central Committee in 1967. When the *Parcham-Khalq* split occurred, he sided with Babrak Karmal and the Parchamis. In 1969 Nur was defeated for reelection, as his leftist leanings were by then clear. He held no known paid position until after the 1978 Marxist coup, when he was made Minister of Interior. Two months later, when the *Khalq* faction purged the leading *Parcham* faction members, Nur was sent to political exile in Washington, D.C., as Afghan Ambassador. He remained there for about two months before being implicated in a plot against the Taraki-led government and ordered home. Instead, he cleaned out the Afghan Embassy's funds and fled to Eastern Europe, probably Prague, where he was given asylum until the Soviets brought him back to Kabul.

Under Babrak, Nur held no ministerial positions; he served as a Secretary in the Politburo and Secretariat, as Vice-President of the Revolutionary Council, and as a member of the Presidium. Why he was not given a ministerial position has puzzled some observers; but the reason may have been that he was charged with the important task of overseeing the PDPA.

Sometime after 1 August 1983 (his last mention by name in the Kabul press), Nur may have come into disfavor with Babrak. On 18

January 1984, Nur and his family left Afghanistan for Moscow. He was presumed to have been sent into some form of exile. But less than a month later, on 13 February 1984, Kabul Radio announced that Nur had joined the official Afghan delegation headed by President Babrak Karmal to attend Soviet Chairman Yuri Andropov's funeral. The radio accorded Nur his full titles as a member of the PDPA Politburo and Secretariat.¹⁰ On 13 June 1984, Nur surfaced again to public attention as the author of a long article on the history of the PDPA in a Soviet publication. Again he was accorded his titles. The appearance of the article suggested that Nur might have received Moscow's backing to resume political activity.¹¹

Conceivably, Nur is being kept in the wings as a possible replacement for Babrak Karmal should Babrak come into disfavor with the Soviets.

Many Afghan emigres consider Nur to be of "below average intelligence" and, though a university graduate, not well read nor well informed. Some who remembered him before 1978 found him "argumentative" and never open-minded. Others somewhat admired him as a man of principle, albeit a convinced Marxist. Though he came from a wealthy, landed family, Nur accepted alienation from his parents and brothers rather than eschew his leftist principles. He was close to Babrak during their time in Parliament in the 1960s; but estrangement presumably occurred after Babrak became head of state.¹²

Nur appears not to know any foreign language well, which is surprising given his one-time appointment to the Foreign Ministry. When he was appointed Ambassador to Washington he scarcely knew English. His mother tongue is *Pushtu*. Nur is married and has a son. Two of his brothers have been settled in the United States for many years.

4. DASTAGIR PANJSHERI, POLITBURO MEMBER

Born in 1933 in the Panjshir Valley, north of Kabul, Dastagir Panjsheri, Politburo member, completed his primary education in Herat. He subsequently attended Kabul Teachers College and eventually Kabul University's Faculty of Letters and Humanities. After graduation, he served for most of the period 1958-69 in various positions in the Ministry of Information and Culture.¹³

From 1969 to 1972, he was in prison for political activities. During the Daoud era, he drew a salary from the Ministry of Information and Culture, though he did not appear at the ministry except to draw his pay.¹⁴

An early member of the PDPA, Panjsheri was among the members of the first Central Committee in 1965. When Babrak and the Parchamis split from the PDPA in 1967, Panjsheri initially followed him; subsequently, Panjsheri joined the Khalqis' Central Committee. Later, he tried unsuccessfully to launch his own communist party.¹⁵

Under Taraki, Panjsheri initially was made Minister of Education and then Minister of Public Works. In September 1979 he left Kabul for medical treatment in the USSR and presumably was there until the Soviet invasion of December 1979.

Under Babrak, Panjsheri was made a member of the Politburo and given the position of Chairman of the Party Control Commission, an important post. Though sometimes labeled a Khalqi, his faction affiliation was not clear.

5. LIEUTENANT GENERAL ABDUL QADER, MINISTER OF DEFENSE (1982-84)

Of all military officers in the upper ranks of the PDPA hierarchy, Lieutenant General Abdul Qader, Minister of Defense for 1982-84, was considered the most able during most of the period 1980-84. He was one of the few Parchamis among the top military figures in the party and government.

Born in Ghor in 1944, Qader received pilot and staff college training in the USSR. Some Afghan emigres believe he became converted to communism during these stints, and he may well have been recruited by the Soviet intelligence services. In the 1973 coup, he was commander of the important Bagram Air Base; he led the air force contingents that revolted there to help bring Daoud to power. As a reward, Qader became commander of air defense forces in 1973; in 1975 he was named commander of the Jalalabad Air Base. After incurring Daoud's disfavor, he was for a time head of the military slaughterhouse. In 1977 he was rehabilitated and appointed chief of staff of air defense, a position some allege he gained by a large bribe.¹⁶

In the 1978 coup, Qader reportedly led the leftist officers who entered the office of the Air Force Chief, General Musa, at Kabul Airport and personally shot Musa. Qader immediately thereafter led the leftist air force units at Bagram Air Base in toppling President Daoud. As a reward, President Taraki appointed Qader Minister of Defense. Three months later, however, Qader was implicated in the August 1978 *Parcham* coup against Taraki; he was arrested and sentenced to death. In October 1979 this sentence was commuted to 15 years in prison, probably on pressure from the Soviets.

Released from prison after the Soviet invasion, Qader initially was made a member of the PDPA Central Committee, and Presidium Vice President; otherwise he was given no special job. In April 1980 he was promoted from major general to lieutenant general. In January 1982 Qader became Acting Minister of Defense; in September 1982 he was named full Minister of Defense. On this appointment his position in the Presidium was dropped.

In December 1984 Qader was relieved of his position as Minister of Defense and reassigned to the unimportant post of first deputy chairman of the Revolutionary Council, the government's rubber-stamp legislature. He was replaced as Minister of Defense by Lieutenant General Nazar Mohammed, the former Chief of Staff.¹⁷ Western analysts speculated that the Soviets had determined that Qader had not been up to his task in the Defense Ministry and that Nazar Mohammed was a more promising Defense chief. The demotion of Qader suggests that his political future in the regime is not bright. Little is known about Qader's personal life.

6. LIEUTENANT GENERAL MOHAMMAD RAFI, MINISTER OF DEFENSE (1980-82)

Lieutenant General Mohammad Rafi, Minister of Defense, 1980-82, was born about 1946 to a Pushtun family from Paghman near Kabul. His father reportedly was the first jet pilot in Afghanistan. A tank officer, Rafi received military training in the USSR. A Parchami like Qader, Rafi took part in the 1978 coup and was appointed Minister of Public Works. Four months later he was arrested for plotting against the Taraki regime and sentenced to 20 years in prison; his sentence later was commuted to 12 years. After his release by the Soviets in late 1979, Rafi was made Minister of Defense. In March 1980 he was promoted from lieutenant colonel to

major general; subsequently, he was promoted to lieutenant general. In June 1981 he was elevated to the Politburo.

In September 1981, Rafi left Kabul to attend a training course in Moscow. After his return in 1982 he was not given back his Defense portfolio, but was made Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, a post with no clear responsibilities.¹⁸

Many observers believed that Rafi's removal as Defense Minister was because of ineptitude. He is reputed to be an alcoholic.¹⁹

7. DR. ANAHITA RATEBZAD, POLITBURO MEMBER

Unquestionably Afghanistan's leading woman communist, Dr. Anahita Ratebzad, Politburo member, has been among Afghanistan's best known women since she successfully stood for parliament in 1965. Among Afghan emigre women, she evokes expressions of great dislike for her aggressive personality and libertine reputation.

Anahita, as she is known, was born in 1931 in a small town near Kabul, where her father was something of a revolutionary and reformer. His anti-regime activities, mainly as editor of a short-lived newspaper, brought him into disfavor with the monarchy. He was compelled to flee to Iran, where he died.

Anahita met her husband, Dr. Kiramuddin Kakar, while she was an adolescent and working as something of a servant with a prominent Kabul family. Dr. Kakar later became Dean of Kabul University's Medical College. Attracted by Anahita's beauty and intelligence, Dr. Kakar befriended her and encouraged her to get an education. He later married her and took her to Chicago, where he was studying medicine. Anahita took advantage of her stay in Chicago to attend nursing school and graduated in 1950 at the age of 19. Returning to Kabul with her husband, she soon became Director of Nursing at Kabul's Hospital for Women. In 1957 she entered Kabul University's Medical School, and graduated in 1963 as Afghanistan's first woman doctor.²⁰

At some point in her early years, Anahita became a convinced communist, though she did not gain this philosophy from her husband. In fact, she became estranged from Dr. Kakar after having three children. In the 1965 parliamentary elections, she was one of three successful PDPA candidates. She was not a good speaker and in Parliament antagonized many members by her aggressive and

arrogant manner. In 1965 she founded the PDPA-controlled Democratic Women's Organization of Afghanistan and has remained its President.

Through her husband's family, Anahita met Babrak Karmal and in time became his mistress. This liaison shocked most Afghans, who hold very traditional notions of family behavior. One of her daughters later married Babrak's younger half-brother, Mahmoud Baryalai, also a prominent communist.

In 1969 Anahita failed to be reelected in the second parliamentary election, and for the next decade devoted herself to party activities. In 1976 she became a member of the *Parcham* Central Committee and in 1977 a member of the reunited PDPA Central Committee. After the April 1978 coup, she was appointed Minister of Social Affairs and Tourism. Two months later, in July 1978, Anahita was removed from office and exiled diplomatically as Afghan Ambassador to Yugoslavia. Two months later she was among those accused of plotting against the Taraki government, was dismissed from her post, and ordered home. Instead, she went to Prague where Babrak had been dismissed as Afghan Ambassador. She remained in Prague until brought back to Kabul by the Soviets in December 1979.

Anahita then became a Politburo member, Minister of Education, and President of three PDPA front organizations: the Afghan-Soviet Friendship Society; the Peace, Solidarity, and Friendship Organization of Afghanistan; and the Democratic Women's Organization of Afghanistan. In November 1980 she was given responsibility for overseeing three ministries: Information and Culture; Higher and Vocational Education; and Public Health. All these responsibilities may have been too much for her. In June 1981 she gave up all her ministerial duties to become a member of the Presidium.

Anahita speaks English and French, and some Russian. Her manner has been described as "shouting too much" and "nervous and high strung." She is not considered to have sufficient leadership qualities to make her a possible future Prime Minister or PDPA General Secretary. She reportedly remains a close but no longer "intimate" friend of Babrak. Many observers believe that the Soviets do not fully trust her; perhaps her stay in the United States has made them distrustful.

8. COLONEL MOHAMMED ASLAM WATANJAR, POLITBURO MEMBER AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS

One of the most interesting and puzzling of the DRA leaders is Colonel Mohammed Aslam Watanjar, Politburo member and Minister of Communications. In other less developed countries, his military exploits probably would have elevated him to the strong-man leadership of the government. But not so in Afghanistan for Watanjar.

In both the 1973 and 1978 coups, Watanjar was the leading military figure. In each instance he rode the lead tank in the assault and capture of the Presidential Palace. His tank was placed on a concrete pedestal in the square fronting the Presidential Palace, as the monument commemorating the 1978 coup.

Despite his military accomplishments and the respect he initially earned within the armed forces, Watanjar subsequently played a relatively minor party and government role. Poorly educated, he likely lacked self-confidence. One Afghan emigre who knew Watanjar described him as "near illiterate"; another claimed "he could not even read a speech written for him." Other observers described him as being little more than a "tank jockey." Though obviously possessing valor, he essentially was a diffident person. According to another emigre who knew him, Watanjar "completely lacked ambition."

Born in 1946 in Paktia province, Watanjar received his primary education in a village school, went on to the Military High School in Kabul, and graduated from the Afghan Military Academy in 1968. He received training as a tank officer in the Soviet Union. He may have been converted to communism—or even became a Soviet agent—while in the Soviet Union.

After he helped Daoud become President in the 1973 coup, Watanjar was rewarded with command of a tank battalion. After the 1978 leftist coup, he was appointed commander of all ground forces. Under Taraki and then Amin, he occupied four successive ministerial positions: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Communications. In September 1979, after President Taraki was overthrown, Watanjar fled to the Soviet Embassy with other disgruntled Khalqis, after being implicated in an alleged plot to remove Prime Minister Amin. Following the Soviet

invasion, he held the unimportant position of Minister of Communications. In June 1981 he finally was added to the Politburo.²¹

Labeled an anti-Amin Khalqi, Watanjar was one of the few Khalqis in high party and governmental positions in 1980-85. His durability probably was due to the following: his reputation among the predominantly Khalqi military officers as a leader in the 1973 and 1978 coups; his anti-Amin stance; and his close ties with the Soviets. Watanjar is not expected to play a more significant future role in the party or government.

Appendix B

Major Peshawar-based Afghan Resistance Leaders and Their Organizations

DURING THE PERIOD 1978-83, SEVEN AFGHAN OPPOSITION figures located in Peshawar were prominent; all of them were passionately anti-communist and anti-Soviet. Four associated with the "fundamentalist" Unity-of-Seven coalition were Syed Burhanuddin Rabbani, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Yunis Khalis, and Rasoul Sayaf. Three associated with the "moderate" Unity-of-Three coalition were Ahmad Gailani, Nabi Mohammadi, and Sibghatullah Mojaddedi.

THE LEADING FUNDAMENTALISTS (MEMBERS OF THE UNITY-OF-SEVEN COALITION)

1. DR. SYED BURHANUDDIN RABBANI AND *JAMIAT-I-ISLAMI AFGHANISTAN* (ISLAMIC LEAGUE OF AFGHANISTAN).

Dr. Syed Burhanuddin Rabbani was the first resistance figure to attract international attention. In May 1978 he organized the first opposition coalition, the short-lived National Rescue Front. When this front collapsed, he formed his own group, *Jamiat-i-Islami Afghanistan*, a fundamentalist Moslem political organization based on *Tajik* and *Uzbek* ethnic support.

From 1978 to 1981, foreign observers usually ranked *Jamiat* as the second most important Peshawar-based party, after Gulbuddin's *Hezb-i-Islami*. But beginning in 1981, *Jamiat* probably became the largest and most effective party. It had a growing number of ties with guerrilla groups located across the northern belt of Afghanistan; these groups ranged from the Panjshir Valley (Kapisa province) and Badakhshan province in the northeast, to Herat in the west. *Jamiat's* best known affiliated local commander was Ahmed Shah Massoud of the Panjshir Valley.

Rabbani was born in Badakhshan province in 1940 and attended school there. He earned a bachelor's degree in Islamic law and theology at Kabul University (Islamic Law College at Paghman). In 1966 Rabbani earned a master's degree in Islamic philosophy at Al-Azhar University in Egypt. While in Egypt he helped found a clandestine organization opposed to the Afghan monarchy. When he returned to Kabul in 1968 to teach at Kabul University, he helped organize a militant Islamic university student organization called the *Akhwan-ul Muslimeen*. The aim of this group was to fight corruption in government and deviation from Islam. The group opposed in 1973-74 the initially leftist-leaning Daoud government. In 1974, when the police sought to arrest Rabbani for his political activities, he fled Kabul and settled in Pakistan.¹

After the 1978 leftist coup, Rabbani's resistance organization in Peshawar received substantial financial support from the Arab Gulf states and from Iranian sources, as well as from a Pakistani organization, *Jamiat-i-Islami Pakistan*. An American newsman, Jere Van Dyk, after meeting Rabbani in 1982, described him as follows:

*Rabbani was soft-spoken and had a weak handshake. He wore a gray karakul cap and a full black beard that was six inches long. His head was shaved. He never smiled. . . . I was looking for a leader, and it clearly wasn't him.*²

Rabbani's organization had a fundamentalist Moslem orientation but no clear political prescription for a future Afghanistan. An official *Jamiat* brochure dated September 1981 stated:



DR. SYED BURHANUDDIN RABBANI, first resistance figure to attract international attention.



GULBUDDIN HEKMATYAR, most controversial resistance leader in Peshawar.

On the international level, Jamiat wants to have good relations with all nations of the world. It is Jamiat's foreign policy to support unity and solidarity among Muslim countries and to back strengthening the nonaligned movement against the aggressive and colonial powers.³

Rabbani told Van Dyk that "Russia is the first enemy; the West is the second." A poster on the wall outside his Peshawar office compound stated in crude English: "In point of us conquerist America and blood thirsty USSR are both enemy of the great revolution of Iran and Afghanistan." It was signed Rabbani.⁴

By August 1983, however, Rabbani had muted his anti-Western sentiments. His group welcomed foreign support from any quarter and claimed to reject the models of Iran and Libya for any future Afghanistan government.⁵

2. GULBUDDIN HEKMATYAR AND HEZB-I-ISLAMI

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar was the most controversial of the resistance leaders in Peshawar and, among Western observers, the least admired. Nevertheless, during the first three years of the resistance his organization, *Hezb*, generally was viewed as the most effective and best financed of the insurgent groups. It probably was the first exile group to take up arms against the Kabul government. The Babrak government—and probably the Soviets too—initially considered his organization the most important opposition group, as evidenced by the false accusation by the Babrak government that in early 1980 Gulbuddin had collaborated with Hafizullah Amin.

Gulbuddin stood for an Islamic republic similar to Khomeini's Iran. He told a Dutch interviewer:

*Democracy and Islam do not go together; that is a very un-Islamic state. Afghanistan will be a strict Islamic state. A group of wise men will adapt the laws to Islam . . . all alcohol will be banned, women will stay at home once again, and the mullahs will have more power.*⁶

For a short time, *Hezb* operated a clandestine radio in Kunar province and ran a small hospital in Peshawar. It also ran schools among the refugee camps in Pakistan. Within Afghanistan, *Hezb* had widespread ties and affiliations with guerrilla groups in most regions. Its main areas of operation from 1980 to 1984 were the two eastern border provinces of Nuristan and Nangarhar, and the region around Kabul.

Like Rabbani, Gulbuddin had connections with Moslem groups in the Middle East and contacts with Khomeini's Iran, Qadaffi's Libya, and Saudi Arabia. For a few years, beginning in 1978, Gulbuddin received financial support from Arab countries and also apparently from Iran. As for the United States, he told an interviewer in 1980 and again in 1982: "Both America and Russia are enemies of Islam."⁷

Hezb's origins go back to 1968. That was the year when some Moslem fundamentalist students in Kabul, among them Gulbuddin and Rabbani, formed the militant *Ahkwan-ul-Muslimeen* organization to counter modernist trends and leftists. During the period 1968-73,

battling leftist student demonstrations in Kabul's streets was part of *Hezb's* activities.

In 1972, Gulbuddin, an engineering student, was accused of killing a leftist student; with the police after him, he fled to Pakistan, where he settled in Peshawar. There he established a small emigre group opposed to the monarchy, and later also opposed to President Mohammad Daoud. For a time, while Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was Pakistan's Prime Minister, Gulbuddin allegedly received clandestine support from the Pakistani government to destabilize the Kabul government.⁸

Among major Peshawar-based resistance leaders, Gulbuddin was the youngest. He was born about 1947 in Ghazni and was a Pushtun. He spoke little English. In appearance, Gulbuddin impressed observers as being intensely serious. A German newsman described him as having "melancholy eyes" set in a "long finely chiseled face, framed by a long black beard."⁹ Another newsman, Jere Van Dyk, described Gulbuddin as follows:

*He was thin, under six feet, with a narrow face made longer by a dark beard and round gray karakul cap; he had cold, cold dark eyes that did not smile—ever. I did not like what I saw. . . . He was frightening.*¹⁰

Others felt this description was overdrawn, if not unfair. "Gulbuddin gives the impression of being a clever and very self-assured person," wrote a Swedish newsman.¹¹ Two Afghan emigres described Gulbuddin as "very pleasant" and a "very honest, good man."¹² Still another Afghan emigre admirer said:

*I have great admiration for him. He is sincere, very hard working (5 a.m. to 10 p.m.), knows most of his followers by name, lives a simple life, and doesn't take advantage of the money at his disposal.*¹³

Gulbuddin was much disliked by rival Peshawar-based resistance groups. He sometimes was accused of encouraging his followers and affiliates to give higher priority to fighting other resistance groups than the Soviets. In 1982 an alleged secret *Hezb* directive came to light. It reportedly ordered *Hezb*-affiliated guerrilla bands to do the following: eliminate by force any rival resistance groups; inform the Soviets, if necessary, of the whereabouts of rival groups;

and eradicate all rival propaganda materials. The objective, the directive said, was that "the influence of other parties must be nullified."¹⁴

When the Directive was publicized, Gulbuddin disclaimed it as a forgery of "Western Imperialism" and told an interviewer: "we do not kill *mujahidin* since this is a sin in Islam."¹⁵ Rather than a Western imperialist forgery, the document may have been a disinformation effort of the KGB. Nonetheless, the fact that *Hezb* bands continued to operate according to the directive made many Afghans suspect that it was genuine.

Some Afghans—like rival Sayed Ahmad Gailani—accused Gulbuddin of secretly working for the Babrak government.¹⁶ A report was circulated that before Gulbuddin became a fundamentalist Moslem, he was for a year a member or sympathizer of the Marxist PDPA; Gulbuddin denied this report.¹⁷

By 1983 Gulbuddin's influence was waning and his image was tarnished. Still, his organization was the most favored beneficiary of largesse provided by the conservative *Jamiat-i-Islami Pakistan*, a major conduit for funds to the resistance.¹⁸

3. MOHAMMAD YUNIS KHALIS AND HIS BREAK-AWAY FACTION OF THE *HEZB-I-ISLAMI*

Though possessing a smaller following than the parent *Hezb-i-Islami* from which he broke away in 1979, Mohammad Yunis Khalis was distinguished from all other Peshawar-based leaders by having several times personally led guerrilla operations in Afghanistan. His principal areas of operation were Nangarhar and Kabul provinces. His organization in the Kabul area was credited with carrying out urban assassinations and kidnappings of PDPA members and Soviet officials. A fundamentalist, Khalis asserted that the only constitution Afghanistan needed was the Koran.

Khalis most closely resembled the stereotypic fierce Afghan among the principal Peshawar resistance leaders. A foreign newsman described him as follows:

*With his shaved head and white shaggy beard, a cartridge belt draped around his chest, Yunis Khalis (resembled the classic Pathan warrior with) the eyes of a hawk, the nose of a vulture, the mouth of a shark.*¹⁹

Born in Nangarhar province in 1919, Khalis attended religious schools in Afghanistan and in the North West Frontier Province of British India (later Pakistan). His career included editing a religious magazine and being an Islamic teacher. His 1974 book criticizing President Daoud as being a pro-communist drew the wrath of the Daoud government; Khalis was forced to go into hiding in the mountains.

Though Khalis's group was relatively small, it suffered from factionalism which, in 1983, threatened a split. Moreover, by August 1983 Khalis was disillusioned with the Unity of Seven and threatened to withdraw.²⁰

4. ABD-I-RAB RASOUL SAYAF AND *ITIHAD-I ISLAMI BARAYE AZADI AFGHANISTAN* (ISLAMIC UNION FOR LIBERATION OF AFGHANISTAN)

Among those associated with the Unity of Seven, its young President, Abd-I-Rab Rasoul Sayaf, must be mentioned. Though possessing few followers of his own, Sayaf was very articulate; he was considered personally acceptable by all members of the Unity of Seven. At the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference in May 1980, he acted as spokesman for the five-member Islamic Alliance. In May 1983, Sayaf was elected the first two-year President of the Unity of Seven. He was particularly close ideologically to Gulbuddin and had a reputation of being aloof to Western diplomats.

Very much a fundamentalist, Sayaf held little admiration for the West. He once said to an interviewer: "if America or any other non-Muslim country helps us, it would be for their own selfish reasons."²¹

Born about 1940, Sayaf earned a bachelor's degree in religion from Kabul University (Islamic Law College at Paghman) and a master's degree in theology from Al-Azhar University in Cairo. He joined the Moslem Brotherhood while in Cairo. After returning to Kabul in the late 1960s, he was associated with the same militant Moslem youth organization in which Rabbani and Gulbuddin were active. He had planned to study in an American university in 1975 but was arrested by the Daoud government. He was held in prison until 1980, when the Babrak government released him. He thereupon fled to Peshawar.

The Leading Moderates and Their Organizations (Unity-Of-Three Coalition)

1. SAYED AHMAD GAILANI AND *MAHAZ-I-MILI ISLAMI* (NATIONAL ISLAMIC FRONT)

Within the Unity-of-Three coalition, Sayed Ahmad Gailani was the best known internationally. Born in 1932, Gailani belonged to a respected Afghan land-owning family that claimed descent from the prophets. In 1954 he graduated from the Islamic Law College of Kabul University at Paghman. From 1965 to 1970, Gailani served as religious adviser to King Zahir Shah, responsible for revising the constitution in accordance with Islamic law. Before the 1978 coup, Gailani had been a successful Kabul businessman. His close ties with the Saudi royal family enabled him to travel internationally on a Saudi passport.

Alone among the principal resistance leaders, Gailani for a short time cooperated with President Mohammad Taraki after the April 1978 Marxist coup. Impressed with Taraki's promised reforms, Gailani served for two months as one of Taraki's religious advisers. But Gailani soon became disillusioned and in October 1978 moved to Peshawar to organize a resistance movement.

Gailani had a local following in the *Pushtu*-speaking border provinces of Paktia and Nangarhar because of family tribal ties and his religious credentials. Five of his brothers and a nephew led guerilla forces. Gailani claimed support from middle-class exiles outside Afghanistan, including former diplomats and government officials. Gailani was on cordial terms with ex-king Zahir Shah.

Among the Peshawar-based leaders, Gailani seemed to have the clearest blueprint for a post-Soviet Afghanistan: a parliamentary democracy that would allow a multiparty system and a mixed public-private economy. He accepted the notion that the USSR should wield the influence expected of a large and important neighbor. Unlike most of the leaders in the Unity of Seven, Gailani was prepared to negotiate a settlement with the Soviets. While the Unity-of-Seven coalition wanted foreign support to come largely from Islamic countries, Gailani welcomed support from non-Islamic powers. He repeatedly appealed to the West to support the resistance.²²

To many Westerners, Gailani was the most attractive of the Peshawar-based opposition leaders. Urbane and fluent in English, he favored Western dress and a Western life style. Though possessing an impressive hereditary religious background, he perhaps was the most secular of the Peshawar-based resistance leaders. The American newsman Jere Van Dyk described him as a "heavy-set man in dark clothes and sunglasses . . . more a man who would write pamphlets than a leader of men."²³

Among Afghans, Gailani was criticized for weak leadership, ineffectiveness, and making a good living from donated funds.



Photo courtesy Committee for a Free Afghanistan

SAYED AHMAD GAILANI,
best known of Unity-of-Three
moderate coalition leaders of the
resistance.

2. MOHAMMAD NABI MOHAMMADI OF *HARAKAT-I-ENQILAB-I-ISLAMI* (REVOLUTIONARY ISLAMIC MOVEMENT)

While Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi's organization militarily was weak in the early years of the resistance, it rapidly extended its network of affiliated guerrilla groups. By July 1981 Nabi's group was credited as the second most important resistance organization based in Peshawar (after *Jamiat*). It had affiliations with guerrilla groups in virtually all Afghan provinces, but was particularly strong in Lowgar, Samangan, Faryab, Farah, and Nimruz provinces.

Nabi himself came from the province of Paktia and was once a member of the Afghan parliament. During the regime of President Mohammad Daoud, Nabi went into voluntary exile. Once considered a fundamentalist, he startled many Afghans in 1981 when his group joined the moderate Unity-of-Three coalition. This action cost him some of his prominent followers, who joined the Unity of Seven.

Nabi's organization did not have clear or distinctive political aims other than being in favor of Afghan tradition and Islam. By 1984, his support in Afghanistan had eroded; fewer guerrilla bands were affiliated with him.

3. SIBGHATULLAH AL-MOJADDEDI OF *JABHA-I-MILI NIJAT* (AFGHAN NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT)

Like Gailani, Sibghatullah Al-Mojaddedi came from an old, highly respected religious family called *Shor Bazaar* that traced its origins to the prophets. Born in 1925, he completed high school in Kabul and then went on to Al-Azhar University in Cairo to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in Islamic law and jurisprudence. Mojaddedi returned to Kabul in 1953 to teach. But his political activities led to imprisonment for four years during the time of Prime Minister Mohammad Daoud, after which he went into exile. Before going to Peshawar, he lived 10 years in Libya and Denmark. In Copenhagen he headed the Saudi- and Libyan-financed Moslem Center of Scandinavia.²⁴ Mojaddedi was described by a Western newsman as follows:

*Mojaddedi is a shrewd-looking man, with greying beard and prominent glasses, a large white turban and rich robes adding to his natural air of dignity. He is fluent in the main European languages, and received with equal composure frequent tribal delegations seeking arms . . . and foreign journalists seeking interviews.*²⁵

Mojaddedi's organization was affiliated with just a few guerrilla groups in Kunar and Paktia provinces. His organization primarily was a family operation and had a reputation for ineffectiveness.

Mojaddedi's vision of a future Afghanistan was of an Islamic republic, possibly under the aegis of a restored monarchy. A moderate on most issues, he was opposed to Islamic fundamentalism. He harbored friendly feelings toward the West. In 1979 some members of his family and two of his brothers were living in the United States. His command of English was excellent.

Appendix C

Guerrilla Group Affiliations in 1983¹



FGHAN GUERRILLA GROUP AFFILIATIONS WITH
Peshawar-based organizations are listed below on a
province-by-province basis.²

EASTERN PROVINCES

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Kunar | Mainly Mojaddedi; also Gulbuddin, Khalis, Gailani, and Rabbani. |
| 2. Nangarhar | Mainly Khalis; and some Rabbani. |
| 3. Laghman | Mainly Gulbuddin and Rabbani; and some Nabi. |
| 4. Kapisa | Mainly Rabbani; some Gulbuddin, Nabi, Khalis, and Mojaddedi. |
| 5. Parwan | Mainly Rabbani; some Gulbuddin, Khalis, and Nabi. |
| 6. Kabul | Real mixture: Nabi, Khalis, Rabbani, Sayaf, Gailani, Mojaddedi, and Gulbuddin. |
| 7. Lowgar | Mainly Nabi; with some Rabbani, Sayaf, Khalis, and Mojaddedi. |
| 8. Paktia | Mainly Gailani; with some Gulbuddin and Khalis. |

NORTHERN PROVINCES

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9. Badakhshan | Mainly Rabbani; with some Gulbuddin and Khalis. |
| 10. Takhar | Mainly Rabbani; with some Gulbuddin. |
| 11. Kunduz | Mainly Rabbani; with some Nabi, Khalis, and Gulbuddin. |
| 12. Baghlan | Mainly Rabbani; with some Nabi and Gulbuddin. |
| 13. Samangan | Nabi and Rabbani. |
| 14. Balkh | Mainly Rabbani; with some Nabi, Gailani, Khalis, and Gulbuddin. |
| 15. Jowzjan | Mainly Rabbani; and some Nabi, Gailani, and Gulbuddin. |
| 16. Faryab | Mainly Nabi; and some Rabbani, Gailani, Gulbuddin, Khalis, and Sayaf. |
| 17. Badghis | Mainly Nabi; and some Rabbani, Gailani, Gulbuddin, Khalis, and Sayaf. |

CENTRAL PROVINCES

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 18. Bamian | Independent (Shura, Nasr, Sepah). |
| 19. Ghor | Mixture of Gulbuddin, Rabbani, Nabi, and Independent. |
| 20. Oruzgan | <i>Not clear</i> |
| 21. Wardak | Mainly Gailani; and some Nabi, Rabbani, and Gulbuddin |

WESTERN PROVINCES

- | | |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 22. Herat | Mainly Rabbani; with some Nabi, Gulbuddin, and Gailani. |
| 23. Farah | Mainly Nabi; with some Rabbani and Gailani. |
| 24. Nimruz | Mainly Nabi; with some Gailani, and Mojaddedi; also an independent (SAMA). |

SOUTHERN PROVINCES

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 25. Ghazni | Mixture of Gailani, Nabi, Gulbuddin, and independent. |
| 26. Zabol | <i>Not clear</i> ; probably Nabi and Gailani. |
| 27. Kandahar | Mainly independent; some Gulbuddin. |
| 28. Helmand | <i>Not clear</i> ; probably Gailani and Nabi. |

Appendix D

History of the Resistance in One Province: Lowgar

The most complete historical account of the resistance in a single province comes from a medical doctor (probably French) who served with the resistance in Lowgar province for five months in 1982.¹

The account describes the rise and decline of the resistance from 1979 through 1982; the decline does not seem to have been repeated in most other provinces. The postscript (page 413) brings the history forward into 1983. An edited version of the account follows:

ARMED RESISTANCE BEGAN IN LOWGAR PROVINCE IN 1979, a year after the leftist April 1978 coup and before the Soviet invasion. The resistance was triggered by opposition to the DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) land reform program, and its leaders were traditional local religious figures. Surprisingly, among those supporting the resistance were some would-be beneficiaries of the land reform, probably because they considered the procedure of confiscation unethical. The uprising led to destruction of government offices, razing of government schools because of Marxist teaching, and killing of party members. The land reform program stopped. Most of the province passed into the control of the resistance.

For a year after the Soviet invasion of late December 1979, the Kabul government did not try to re-establish its control in Lowgar

province. During this year, 1980, local resistance leaders were offered material and other assistance by the Peshawar-based resistance organizations. When the Kabul government administration was expelled, the province was run by local people. The *mujahidin* lived among the civilian populace, collaborators were purged, and traffic over the roads was checked by guerrilla units. Morale in the resistance was very high.

In 1981, the second year of the Soviet occupation, the Peshawar-based groups expanded their influence in the area. This influence reached the point that four Peshawar organizations had affiliations with different guerrilla groups—two gaining adherents from the majority Pushtun tribal elements, and the other two from the minorities. Some joint guerrilla operations were carried out, but normally each group fought on its own. No intergroup fighting broke out during this period. A highlight of 1981 was the successful interdiction of Soviet-DRA road traffic over the main highway in the province; this highway connected Kabul and Gardez, the capital of neighboring Paktia province. Gardez, which was in the hands of the Soviet-DRA forces, could be reached only by air or by a detour via Ghazni, capital of Ghazni province to the west.

In late 1981, the Soviets and DRA began to re-establish their administrative control in Lowgar province.

First, the Soviets cleared the Kabul-Gardez highway of all nearby trees, houses, and gardens. Once this was completed, convoys could more safely use the road again.

Second, in early 1982, Soviet-DRA forces launched frequent counterinsurgency operations, with the result that two villages near the provincial capital of Baraki Barak came under DRA control. The widespread fighting and destruction led to an exodus by many rural inhabitants to other areas of the province—to DRA-controlled Gardez itself, or to Pakistan.

Friction among the rival Peshawar-affiliated guerrilla groups that had begun in 1981 came to a head over the issue of taxes; each resistance group tried to impose its own taxes. When the Soviets and the DRA applied counterinsurgency pressure, friction among the groups intensified—and the one-time spirit of cooperation disappeared. In fact, most of the activities of the resistance concerned rival armed

groups and their commanders, and led to a loss of support from the local population.

At the height of this state of friction, in July 1982, the Soviets and the DRA army launched an effective counterinsurgency action in the province, using the encirclement tactic. More than 200 *mujahidin* were killed, and the Soviets notched up one of their most successful counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan. The people in Lowgar province lost confidence in the resistance groups, and general morale plummeted.

A second Soviet-DRA counterinsurgency operation, launched in September 1982, also was effective. This second operation led to the capture of four villages and triggered more civilian flight to Pakistan. By the end of 1982, the nationalists had suffered a severe setback. But many who remained in the province were by no means reluctant to fight.

POSTSCRIPT In the spring of 1983, the resistance in Lowgar province recovered. Well-armed groups appeared or reasserted themselves. Perhaps through a general realization that disunity had helped the Soviets achieve success in the year before, the guerrilla bands, both new and old, now began to cooperate closely. The resilience of the resistance had been proved once again.²

Appendix E

The War Situation in One Typical Afghan Province: Badakhshan in Late 1982

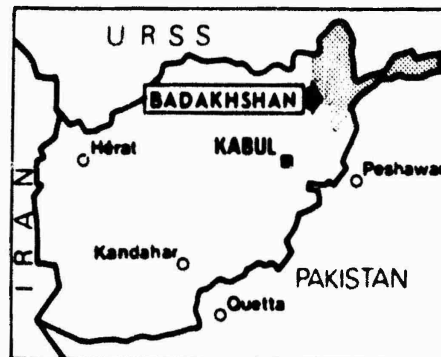


ADAKHSHAN PROVINCE IS LOCATED IN THE NORTH-eastern corner of Afghanistan, with a frontier bordering on the USSR, mainland China, and Pakistan. It is extremely mountainous. To Westerners, Badakhshan is best known for the rare variety of wild Marco Polo sheep found only in the high mountains in the Wakhan Corridor. This sparsely inhabited corridor has been under total Soviet administration since the summer of 1980. This Soviet domination is designed presumably to halt any Chinese assistance to the resistance across the 45-mile-long Afghan-Chinese border.

In late 1982, a Westerner visited the province with the resistance forces and gave the following account:¹

Nearly all of Badakhshan has been under resistance control since an uprising in 1979, when for a few days the *mujahidin* captured and held Faizabad, the provincial capital.

Thereafter, until the time of the Westerner's visit, Soviet and DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) army garrisons were limited to Faizabad itself, to five small fortified positions along the Kokcha River, and to three towns on the river border with the USSR. The



Soviets seemed content to maintain minimum daytime control of the few main urban centers. Faizabad was guarded by the largest Soviet force, 2,000-3,000 men. This force was located mostly at the airport, where 15 helicopter gunships and transport helicopters were based; these helicopters were used to supply the more isolated provincial garrisons, such as Jorm, Barak, and Qoran-e-Manjan. A DRA army unit guarded most of the town of Faizabad, at least in daylight.

With few exceptions, all Soviet-DRA bases and posts in Badakhshan province were supplied by helicopter. Only Faizabad received a heavily escorted supply convoy that came by road, once a month, via Keshem from adjacent Takhar province in the west. Otherwise, the roads and countryside totally were in the hands of the resistance. With permission of the Soviets and the guerrilla forces, one or two private trucks and buses once a week plied between Faizabad and Barak.

Since mid-1981, a standoff existed militarily between Soviet-DRA forces and the resistance. The Soviets and the DRA army almost never ventured outside their fortified positions; guerrilla group activities were limited to night attacks on towns and forts, and on the occasional convoy. From the ridges overlooking Faizabad, guerrilla fighters launched raids into the city several nights a week.

From a strategic standpoint, the most significant development in Badakhshan province in 1982 was the Soviet occupation of the mountain hamlet of Qoran-e-Manjan. This village was the last and highest in the upper valley of the Kokcha River, just below the Anjoman Pass; this pass controlled access to the upper end of the Panjshir Valley and also was the most direct route to Pakistan. By occupying Qoran-e-Manjan, the Soviets forced resistance fighters and their donkey-laden supply trains to make a long detour. Travel from Jorm to Pakistan used to take five days, but now took up to a month. The Qoran-e-Manjan outpost was supplied entirely by helicopter.

Seven main guerrilla units, with known commanders, operated in Badakhshan province. The units got along together reasonably well. Resistance unity was personified by a provincial general commander, a Moslem cleric named Maulawi Khomayni. He had played an important role in the uprising of 1979, when Faizabad had been temporarily captured. He wielded influence from a *mujahidin*-held village north of the provincial capital. All the local guerrilla groups claimed affiliation to Rabbani's Peshawar-based *Jamiat-i-Islami*, ex-

cept a few hundred partisans of Gulbuddin's Peshawar-based *Hezb-i-Islami* in one village. Even the *Shiia* community in a town in the east had rallied to *Jamiat*. The guerrilla forces were well supplied with light weapons, but lacked machine guns and rocket-launchers.

Although the people of Badakhshan were poor, as they always had been, the province was self-sufficient in grain. Cultural traditions such as the equestrian game of *bushkasi** continued, but now was played by teams organized by guerrilla commanders.

POSTSCRIPT (1983-84)

A British doctor, Alec Anderson, who worked with a French-sponsored medical team in southern Badakhshan, provided a partial update report on the situation in the province. He served there from June 1983 to September 1984. The main features of his account are as follows:²

- The Soviets controlled most of the low-lying areas of the province and the resistance held most of the mountainous portion. Badakhshan is mostly hilly or mountainous.
- After a *mujahidin* band laid land mines in Soviet territory, across the Amu Darya river from the Dawa (*Paj Dara*) area, causing some Soviet casualties, the Soviets heavily reinforced their border.
- Dr. Anderson never saw a single Soviet or DRA prisoner (although captures occurred) because prisoners were quickly executed, unless they were considered to be Moslem; in that case "they would be let off."
- Most of the resistance-held areas in the province adhered to the Peshawar-based *Jamiat* resistance party; but a few *Hezb*-affiliated localities existed. Occasionally, light fighting occurred between *Jamiat* and *Hezb* bands.
- The United States was "rather unpopular," in part because of Iran's influence. Iran's leader, Khomeini, was "very highly regarded."
- Morale in the resistance was good. "They seem to be willing to go on forever," said Dr. Anderson.

*Also called *buzkashi* and *boz krashi*, Afghanistan's most distinctive sport, in which horsemen compete to carry the headless body of a goat to the goal.

Endnotes

THE GREAT GAME: 1837-1944

1. My recollection, confirmed by two other US State Department officers who remember seeing the message. The quotation is a paraphrase.
2. Seymour Becker, *Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 15, 348-49; Henry S. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1983), p. 9 and note on p. 257; David Fromkin, "The Great Game in Asia," *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1980), p. 935; and Michael Edwards, *Playing the Great Game* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1975), pp. vii-viii.
3. Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 99.
4. *Ibid.*, note on p. 99.
5. Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 380.
6. For full text, see W. K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia*, 3d edition (London, 1967), appendix II, pp. 333-36.
7. Becker, p. 96; William Habberton, *Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan, 1837-1907* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1937), p. 83; for Skobeloff quotation, see Percy Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan*, Vol. 2 (London: Macmillan & Co., 1940), p. 83.
8. Gregorian, p. 110; and J. M. Brereton, "The Panjdeh Crisis, 1885," *History Today*, No. 29 (January 1979), p. 47.
9. Gregorian, note p. 102.
10. *Ibid.*, note on p. 103.

11. East India Company Secret Committee letter, quoted in Fraser-Tytler, p. 90.
12. Gregorian, p. 109.
13. Fraser-Tytler, p. 135; and Dupree, p. 406.
14. Fraser-Tytler, pp. 144-48; Dupree, pp. 408-09; and Gregorian, pp. 113-14.
15. Dupree, pp. 408-09; Gregorian, pp. 114-15; and R. C. Majumdar, H. C. Raychaudhuri, and K. Datta, *An Advanced History of India, Part III* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1962), pp. 834-36.
16. Sykes, pp. 162-65; Dupree, p. 424.
17. Dupree, p. 423; and Edwards, pp. 90-92.
18. Louis Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs*, Vol. 1 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930), p. 425; for text of agreement, see Sykes, Appendix E, pp. 356-57.
19. Fraser-Tytler, pp. 179-80; Dupree, p. 433; Sykes, p. 236.
20. Gregorian, pp. 230-31; Dupree, pp. 442-43; Majumdar, Raychaudhuri, and Datta, pp. 904-05; and T. A. Heathcote, *The Afghan Wars, 1839-1919* (London: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 1980), pp. 171-77 and 196-205.
21. Bradsher, p. 13 and note on p. 259; for text of the statement, see Alan Z. Rubinstein, *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union*, 3d Edition (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 388.
22. Gregorian, p. 223.
23. Ludwig W. Adamec, *Afghanistan, 1900-1923* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967), p. 143.
24. Quoted in Fischer, pp. 285-86; see also E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution; 1917-1923*, Vol. 3 (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953), pp. 238-39.
25. Fischer, p. 285.
26. For treaty text, see Adamec, pp. 188-91; Gregorian, pp. 232, 238, and 376; and Carr, pp. 291-92.
27. Thomas T. Hammond, *Red Flag Over Afghanistan* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), p. 13. Like subsequent Soviet "referendums," Hammond suggests these were rigged.
28. Fischer, pp. 786-87; Gregorian, p. 232; Ludwig W. Adamec, *Afghanistan's Foreign Affairs to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1974), p. 202; and Leon B. Poullada, *Reform*

and *Rebellion in Afghanistan, 1919-29* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973), pp. 136-37.

29. Gunther Nollau and Hans Jurgen Wiehe, *Russia's South Flank: Soviet Operations in Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 102.

30. Fraser-Tytler, p. 219; Nollau and Wiehe, p. 103; Gregorian, p. 233; Bradsher, p. 15; Georges Agabekov, *OGPU: The Russian Secret Terror* (New York: Brentano, 1931), p. 66; and Adamec, *Afghanistan's Foreign Affairs*, pp. 107-08, 112, and 168.

31. David C. Montgomery, "The Uzbeks in Two States: Soviet and Afghan Policies Toward an Ethnic Minority," in William O. McCagg, Jr., and Brian D. Silver, *Soviet Asian Ethnic Frontiers* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979), p. 165.

32. After the Soviet contingent withdrew, Ghulam Nabi, with Afghans from the expeditionary force and some residents of Russian Turkestan who rightly could be called Soviet citizens, pushed on to the Gorband Valley and Bamiyan en route to Kabul to continue the fight. Receipt of news that Amanullah had fled the country discouraged the little force, and it too retired into the USSR. The best accounts of this whole intervention episode are to be found in Agabekov, *ibid.*, pp. 166-69; Hammond, pp. 14-18, and Rhea Talley Stewart, *Fire in Afghanistan, 1914-1929* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1973), pp. 561-62 and 569-70. See also Gregorian, p. 278; Nollau and Wiehe, pp. 104-05; and Adamec, *Afghanistan's Foreign Affairs*, pp. 160-62.

33. Agabekov, pp. 69-70; and Hammond, pp. 12-13.

34. Dupree, p. 448.

35. Nollau and Wiehe, p. 105; and Hammond, p. 18.

36. Nollau and Wiehe, pp. 106-7; Gregorian, p. 333; and Adamec, *Afghanistan*, pp. 214 and 245.

37. Fischer, p. 294.

38. Carr, pp. 468-69.

39. Nollau and Wiehe, p. 102.

40. Milan Hauner, "The Significance of Afghanistan: Lessons from the Past," *The Round Table*, No. 279 (July 1980), pp. 242-43.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 242.

42. Nollau and Wiehe, p. 107; Bradsher, p. 16; and Donald N. Wilber, editor, *Afghanistan* (New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files, 1956), p. 152.

GROWING SOVIET INVOLVEMENT, 1945-1979

1. Suzanne Jolicoeur Katsikas, *The Arc of Socialist Revolutions: Angola to Afghanistan* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1982), p. 224; and Henry S. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1983), pp. 61-62.
2. Leon B. Poullada, "Afghanistan and the United States: The Crucial Years," *The Middle East Journal*, Spring 1981, p. 182.
3. Ibid. See also Poullada, "An American Failure," *Freedom at Issue*, No. 74, September-October 1983, p. 31; and Poullada, "The Failure of American Diplomacy in Afghanistan," *World Affairs*, Vol. 145, No. 3 Winter 1982/83, p. 233.
4. Letter based on 1947 British Staff Papers, *The Economist*, 19 July 1980, p. 4; and statements of Abdul Majid Khan, Minister of National Economy, in Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948*, Vol. 5, (Washington, DC, 1975), pp. 492-93.
5. Letter to *The Economist*, 2 August 1980, p. 4; and Poullada, "Afghanistan and the United States: The Crucial Years," pp. 186-7.
6. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1950*, Vol. V (Washington, DC, 1978), pp. 1,446-50; and *The Declassified Documents 1979* (Washington, DC, 1979), quoted by Bradsher, p. 20.
7. Poullada, "Afghanistan and the United States: The Crucial Years," pp. 186-87.
8. Bradsher, pp. 28-29. Less credible are the figures of 7,000 Afghan officers trained by the Soviets and 600 by the Americans between 1956 and 1970, in Patrick J. Garrity, "The Soviet Military Stake in Afghanistan: 1956-79," *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies*, Vol. 125, No. 3, September 1980, p. 32.
9. Bradsher, p. 25.
10. Ibid., p. 27.

11. Ibid., pp. 25 and 28.
12. Under one agreement, 100 Afghan military personnel were sent annually after 1956 to the USSR for training. See Marie Broxup, "The Soviets in Afghanistan: The Anatomy of a Takeover," *Central Asian Survey*. Vol. 1, No. 4, April 1983, p. 83; Garrity, p. 32; and interview on 21 June 1984 with former senior Ministry of Planning official, who requested anonymity.
13. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Soviet Policy Toward Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan* (New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1982), p. 138; and American University, *Area Handbook for Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1969), pp. 375-81.
14. International Monetary Fund (IMF) and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), *Direction of Trade, Annual 1970-74*, p. 69; and IMF *Direction of Trade Statistics, Yearbook 1982*, pp. 60-61.
15. Louis Dupree, "Red Flag over the Hindu Kush, Part IV: Foreign Policy and the Economy," *American Universities Field Staff Reports*, Asia 1980, No. 27, p. 7.
16. Nake M. Kamrany, *Peaceful Competition in Afghanistan: American and Soviet Models for Economic Aid*, (Washington, DC: Communication Service Corporation, 1969), p. 62.
17. L. Mironov and G. Polyakov, "Afghanistan: The Beginning of a New Life," *International Affairs* (Moscow), March 1979, p. 54.
18. Ibid., pp. 24-25.
19. Bradsher, pp. 24-25 and 90.
20. Central Intelligence Agency, *Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less-Developed Countries, 1979 and 1954-1979* (Washington, DC, 1980), p. 35. According to a former senior Afghan Ministry of Planning official, beginning in the 1960s, 100 Afghan civilian students were sent annually to Moscow or Tashkent on full scholarships; then, in 1972, because of more stringent Afghan academic screening requirements, the number dropped to 50 or less per year, to the annoyance of the Soviets.
21. Ibid., former senior Ministry of Planning official.
22. Interview on 18 January 1984 with former senior Ministry of Education official, who requested anonymity.
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assessments are given by Kamrany, and a senior Ministry of Planning official.

25. Table of statistics on loans and grants to Afghanistan, 1946-80, in US Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (1980)* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2 February 1981), p. 935.

26. Interview on 17 January 1984 with former senior Ministry of Information and Culture official, who requested anonymity.

27. Ibid.

28. Rubenstein, p. 133.

29. Bradsher, pp. 63-66; and 17 October 1983 conversation with former senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, who requested anonymity.

30. Former senior Ministry of Planning official.

31. Kamrany, p. 49.

32. Former senior Ministry of Planning official.

33. John F. Shroder, Jr., *The USSR and Afghanistan Mineral Resources* (University of Nebraska at Omaha, Occasional Paper No. 3, 1983), pp. 121-22.

34. R. T. Akhramovich, *Outline History of Afghanistan After the Second World War* (Moscow: Nauka Publishing House, 1966), p. 69.

35. Nikita S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1971), p. 508.

36. Declassified Department of State memorandum of conversation, "Meeting of the President and Prince Naim," in Washington, DC, 27 September 1962.

37. American Embassy Kabul airgram A-71, 26 June 1971, quoted in Bradsher, p. 51; also, declassified State Department memorandum declares that "The preeminent US policy objective in Afghanistan is maintenance of Afghan neutrality and independence," and that "Should Afghanistan fall within the Soviet orbit . . . US policy objectives in Iran and Pakistan would be seriously threatened." See also Theodore L. Eliot, Jr., "Afghanistan After the 1978 Revolution," *Strategic Review*, Vol. VII, Spring 1979, p. 61.

38. Bradsher, p. 51.

39. "Meeting of the President and Prince Naim."

40. Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 261.

41. Gunter Nollau and Hans Jurgen Wiehe, *Russia's South Flank: Soviet Operations in Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), pp. 96-97.
42. Beverley Male, *Revolutionary Afghanistan: A Reappraisal* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), p. 59.
43. Fred Halliday, "Revolution in Afghanistan," *New Left Review*, No. 112, November/December 1978, p. 40; and Bradsher, p. 71.
44. Bradsher, note no. 102 on p. 270. See also Dupree, "Red Flag Over the Hindu Kush, Part VI: Repressions, or Security Through Terror," *American Universities Field Staff Reports*, 1980 No. 29 Asia, pp. 8-9. Several well-educated Afghan emigres, including politicians and government officials, gave estimates of PDPA members at the time of the April 1978 coup as being 7,000, 10,000, or 20,000.
45. US Department of State, *Soviet Dilemmas in Afghanistan*, Special Report No. 71 (Washington, DC: June 1980), p. 2.
46. Halliday, pp. 25-26; Bradsher, p. 50; Hannah Negaran, "The Afghan Coup of April 1978: Revolution and International Security," *Orbis*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Spring 1979), p. 97; Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), p. 29-30 and 34-36; and 12 January 1984 interview with former Member of Parliament, who requested anonymity.
47. Interview with former KGB officer Vladimir Kuzichkin in "Coups and Killings in Kabul: A KGB Defector Tells How Afghanistan Becomes Brezhnev's Viet Nam," *Time*, 22 November 1982, p. 33.
48. Bradsher, p. 44.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., pp. 476-47 and 70; and Louis Dupree, "Afghanistan Under the Khalq," *Problems of Communism*, July-August 1979, p. 39.
51. Interview with former Member of Parliament.
52. Bradsher, p. 34; Broxup, p. 85; and interview with former senior Ministry of Planning official.
53. Rubinstein, p. 159.
54. Reported by Poullada, "The Failure of American Diplomacy," p. 244.
55. Interview of former KGB officer Vladimir Kuzichkin, *Time*, p. 33.
56. Broxup, pp. 86-88.
57. Arnold, p. 63.

58. Interview on 1 November 1983 with another former senior Ministry of Education official, who requested anonymity.
59. Interview on 28 February 1984 with Afghan emigre, who requested anonymity.
60. Broxup, p. 87.
61. Male, p. 58.
62. Ibid., p. 53.
63. Former senior Ministry of Education official.
64. Interview with ex-Herat governor G. A. Ayeen, 31 October 1983.
65. Interview on 17 January 1984 with former middle-level Ministry of Water and Power official, who requested anonymity.
66. Former Ministry of Planning official.
67. Former senior Ministry of Information and Culture official.
68. Interview with several Afghan emigres, October 1973-February 1984.
69. For example, S. M. Zekay, "Afghanistan: The Beginning of a New Era," *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1, January 1979, p. 105.
70. Interview with Vladimir Kuzichkin, *Time*.
71. Broxup, pp. 88-89.
72. *Kabul Times*, 3 May 1979, quoted by Arnold, p. 57.
73. Dupree, "Red Flag Over the Hindu Kush, Part II: The Accidental Coup, or Taraki in Blunderland," *American Universities Field Staff Reports*, 1979 No. 46 Asia, pp. 6-13.
74. Rubinstein, p. 159, gives 2,000 killed; Broxup, p. 90, cites 3,000 dead.
75. Interview with former KGB officer Vladimir Kuzichkin, *Time*.
76. Bradsher, p. 96.
77. US sources quoted by Bradsher, p. 123. See also Broxup, pp. 90-91. CIA, "Communist Aid Activities . . .," estimates 3,700 Soviet and East European economic technicians in Afghanistan in 1979, p. 21.
78. CIA, "Communist Aid Activities . . .," p. 3.
79. Broxup, p. 95; Bradsher, pp. 152-63; and Thomas T. Hammond, *Red Flag Over Afghanistan* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), pp. 132-44.
80. Robert Trumbull, *The New York Times*, 16 April 1979; and Stuart Auerbach, *The Washington Post*, 23 April 1979.

81. Gulam Muradov, "National-Democratic Revolution in Afghanistan: A Soviet View," *Journal of South Asian and Middle East Studies*, Vol. VI, No. 1, Fall 1982, p. 63.
82. Ulyanovskiy, "The Afghan Revolution," *USSR Report*, 20 July 1982, quoted in Bradsher, p. 154.
83. *Izvestia* article, April 1980, quoted in *Karachi Dawn*, 10 August 1983, in *JPRS Near East/North Africa Report*, 7 September 1983, pp. 80-81. See also testimony of KGB defector Kuzichkin, *Time*.
84. Roy Medvedev, "Interview," *New Left Review*, No. 121, May-June 1980, p. 93; and Dev Murarka, "Afghanistan: The Russian Intervention: A Moscow Analysis," *The Round Table*, No. 282, April 1981, p. 127.
85. Bradsher, p. 137.
86. Victor Sidenko, "Two Years of the Afghan Revolution," *New Times* (Moscow), 25 April 1980, p. 23.
87. "The Brezhnev Doctrine, Afghanistan, and the Upcoming Warsaw Pact Summit," *Radio Liberty Research Report*, RL-171/80 (7 May 1980).
88. *Izvestia* article, quoted in *Karachi Dawn*.
89. Murarka, p. 130.
90. According to two sources, the likely date for the Soviet decision to intervene, if Amin could not otherwise be removed, was at the end of November 1979, probably at the Politburo meeting on 26 November 1979. See Bradsher, pp. 163-64; and Murarka, p. 126.
91. Testimony of KGB defector Kuzichkin, *Time*.
92. *Ibid.*
93. US Department of State, *The Kidnapping and Death of Ambassador Dubs*, 14 February 1979 (Washington, DC, 1979).
94. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43; and Andrew L. Eiva, "The Russian Invasion of Afghanistan: The Facts Behind the Takeover," *Islamic Defence Review*, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 11; and KGB defector's testimony, *Time*, p. 34.
95. Bradsher, pp. 144-46.
96. Novosti Press Agency, *The Truth About Afghanistan: Documents, Facts, Eyewitness Reports* (Moscow, 1980), pp. 10-11.
97. Bradsher, p. 176. And Babrak Karmal interview by an Egyptian correspondent, *FBIS South Asia Report*, 23 January 1983.
98. Babrak Karmal press interview, 1 September 1980, in *FBIS South Asia Daily Report*, 8 September 1980; and Karmal press interview, 29 March 1982, in *FBIS South Asia Daily Report*, 31 March 1982. See also explanation in Murarka, p. 127. And Babrak interview, *FBIS South Asia Report*, 23 January 1986.

99. Aga Shahi comment at Villanova University international seminar on "Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan in Soviet-American Relations," 8 December 1984.

100. For text of the treaty, see Dupree, "Red Flag Over Hindu Kush, Part I: Leftist Movements in Afghanistan," *American Universities Field Staff Reports*, 1979, No. 44, Asia, Appendix, pp. 13-15.

101. The Soviets did a masterful job in neutralizing and sabotaging the local Afghan military forces, consisting of two divisions and a brigade; see Eiva, pp. 11-12.

102. Bradsher, pp. 169-88.

103. Eiva, p. 12; and David F. McDermott, "The Invasion of Afghanistan," *Infantry*, January-February 1985, p. 22.

104. Interview with KGB defector, *Time*. In September 1981 DRA Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost told an interviewer that Amin was executed 26 December 1979 by decree of the Central Committee of the PDPA; see Hafeez Malik, "Memorandum of Conversations with Mr. Shah Mohammad Dost," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. V, No. 2, Winter 1981, p. 68.

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1. Text carried in *The New York Times*, 28 December 1979.
2. Kabul Radio, in FBIS *Middle East Daily Report*, 28 December 1978; and DRA Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *White Book: Foreign Policy Documents of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan* (Kabul, 1981), p. 26.
3. Henry S. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1983), p. 123; and Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq* (Stanford CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), p. 91.
4. Arnold, p. 100.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
6. Victor Sidenko, "Two Years of the Afghan Revolution," *New Times* (Moscow), Vol. 17, No. 80, April 1980, p. 23.
7. Some Afghan opposition elements believe the actual membership was lower. One such estimate is 1,700 members; see *The Jihad Rays* (Peshawar) (January-February 1984), p. 12.
8. Arnold, pp. 100 and 116. A knowledgeable Indian journalist estimated the number as "hardly 3,000," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 February 1980, p. 28.
9. Prague radio broadcast (14 January 1980), in FBIS *Middle East and North Africa Daily Report*, 15 January 1980.
10. Hamburg *Der Spiegel* interview, FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 2 April 1982.
11. Bradsher, p. 121.
12. Stuart Auerbach, *Paris International Herald Tribune* (24 July 1980); and Munich CND/BM news agency report (Radio Liberty Research archives), 11 June 1981.
13. FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 1 May 1980.

14. Bradsher, p. 121.
15. Paris *L'Humanite*, 5 July 1980, in FBIS *Middle East and North Africa Daily Report*, 9 July 1980.
16. Gulam Muradov, "National-Democratic Revolution in Afghanistan: A Soviet View," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. VI, No. 1, Fall 1982, p. 63.
17. Arnold, p. 99.
18. *The New York Times*, 30 March 1980, p. 7.
19. Personal interviews with three ex-Ministry of Education officials, November 1983 and January 1984.
20. *Die Welt* interview in FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 29 December 1983.
21. Arnold, p. 99; and US Government sources.
22. For text see FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 23 April 1980.
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24. For text of the "Rules of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan," see *Afghanistan Newsletter* (New York), Vol. X, No. 4, October 1982, pp. 25-34.
25. Ruth L. and Anthony Arnold, "Afghanistan," in *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs 1983* (Stanford CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), p. 141.
26. Personal interview in January 1984 with Afghan ex-parliament member, an exile, who asked not to be named.
27. Quoted in Bradsher, p. 82; see also FBIS *Middle East and North Africa Daily Report*, 9 June 1978.
28. Bradsher.
29. *Der Spiegel* interview in FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 2 April 1980.
30. Hafeez Malik, "Memorandum of Conversations with Mr. Shah Mohammad Dost," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Winter 1981, p. 69.
31. Babrak Karmal told a *Newsweek* interviewer in June 1984: "This is not a socialist revolution. . . . Ours is a national democratic revolution that is antifeudal and antiimperialist--with a socialist orientation." *Newsweek*, 11 June 1984, p. 56.
32. *London Daily Telegraph*, 15 July 1981.
33. PDPA Theses, Section 7, in FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 22 April 1980.

34. FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 11 and 23 January 1980.
35. FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 6 July 1983.
36. FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 11 and 23 January 1980.
37. J. H., "Continuing Fights Between Factions in Kabul," Zurich *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, in JPRS *Near East/South Asia Report*, 10 August 1981, p. 26, and Reuters (New Delhi), 12 June 1981.
38. Personal interview in January 1984 with Afghan emigre, who asked not to be named.
39. Personal discussion on 17 January 1984 with Rosanne Klass, former *New York Times* stringer.
40. Personal interviews with five Afghan exiles in January 1984; they asked not to be named.
41. In a remarkable disclosure, at a time when Sarwari was DRA ambassador to Mongolia, DRA Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost told an interviewer in September 1981 that "(Sarwari) is now out of the picture. He was detested by the people of Afghanistan because he was a tool in the hands of Mr. Amin. In fact, most of Amin's oppressive deeds and crimes against the people of Afghanistan were executed through Mr. Sarwari." See Malik, p. 71.
42. Most of the biographic data is drawn from Arnold, pp. 19-22, and Ludwig W. Adamec, *First Supplement to the Who's Who of Afghanistan* (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck, 1979), pp. 9-10.
43. Malik, p. 69.
44. Article by Abdol Majid Mangal in *The Sunday Telegraph*, London, 24 June 1984, in FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 29 June 1984.
45. Interview with former KGB major Vladimir Kuzichkin, *Time*, 22 November 1982, p. 33.
46. Personal interviews with Afghan exiles, January 1984, in Washington, DC; they asked not to be named.
47. Biographic data drawn mostly from Arnold, *Two-Party Communism*, pp. 180-81, and Adamec, p. 10.
48. Personal interviews with Afghan exiles in Washington, DC, and New York in January 1984 and in Paris in March 1984.
49. Biographic data drawn mostly from Arnold, *Two-Party Communism*, p. 91, and Adamec, p. 17.
50. Personal interviews with Afghan exiles in Washington, DC, and New York in January 1984.

51. Personal interview with Afghan exiles in Western Europe in March 1984.
52. Biographic data drawn mostly from Arnold, *Two-Party Communism*, p. 182; Adamec, p. 12; and personal interviews with Afghan exiles in January 1984. See also Ruth and Anthony Arnold, "Afghanistan," *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs 1985* (Stanford CA: Hoover Institute Press, 1985), p. 144.
53. Interview in Washington, DC, in May 1984 with Afghan exile, who asked not to be identified.
54. Sidenko, p. 24.
55. Malik, p. 71.
56. Babrak speech text in FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 8 July 1983.
57. FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 9 June 1980, and JPRS *Near East/North Africa Report*, 10 October 1980.
58. Personal interviews with Afghan exiles in Omaha, Neb., and Washington, DC, in November and January 1984.
59. Personal interview with Afghan exiles in January 1984.
60. Arnold, *Two-Party Communism*, p. 112.
61. Ibid., pp. 112-13; US Department of State, *Afghanistan: A Year Of Occupation*, Special Report No. 79 (Washington, DC, February 1981), p. 3; and *Pakistan Times* 17 May 1981 in JPRS *Near East/North Africa Report*, 18 June 1981.
62. Arnold, *Two-Party Communism*, p. 111.
63. *The Economist*, 2 August 1980, p. 34.
64. *The New York Times*, 16 March 1982.
65. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "The Soviet Union and Afghanistan," *Current History* (October 1983), p. 320.
66. "Afghan Students in the Soviet Union," Afghan Information Centre *Monthly Report* (Peshawar), No. 17 (September 1982), p. 7.
67. Interviews with Afghan exiles in New York, Washington, DC, and Paris in January-March 1984.
68. Arnold, *Two-Party Communism*, pp. 116-17.
69. Ibid., p. 116.
70. US Department of State, *Afghanistan: Three Years of Occupation*, Special Report No. 106 (Washington, DC: December 1982), p. 6.
71. FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 22 Feb. 1982; Arnold, *Two-Party Communism*, p. 116; and *The New York Times*, 16 March 1982.
72. *Three Years of Occupation*, p. 7.

73. *Pravda* article (11 March 1982), quoted in Radio Liberty Research report, RL-165/82 (19 April 1982), p. 1.
74. Babrak speech in FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 8 July 1983.
75. Arnold, "Afghanistan," 1985 *Yearbook*, p. 143.
76. Arnold, *Two-Party Communism*, p. 117.
77. Ibid., p. 119; and Arnold, "Afghanistan," 1983 *Yearbook*, pp. 140-42.
78. Arnold, *Two-Party Communism*, pp. 118-19.
79. Ibid., p. 119, quoted from *Kabul New Times*.
80. *Kabul Heywad* (30 July 1983), in JPRS *Near East/South Asia Report*, 3 October 1983, p. 88.
81. PDPA Central Committee report in FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 8 April 1982.
82. Babrak Karmal speech in FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 8 July 1983.
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84. Ibid., p. 133. According to Sayd Bahodine Majrooh, director of the Afghan Information Centre in Peshawar, an Afghan civil servant who is a PDPA member earns four times as much as a non-member; see Paris *Le Monde*, 29 December 1984, in JPRS *Near East/South Asia Report*, 14 February 1985, p. 104.
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86. Babrak speech in FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 3 April 1985.
87. Interview in November 1984 of Gul Koragani, formerly with the Foreign Trade Section of the Ministry of Commerce, *Afghanistan Forum*, May 1985, p. 25.
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89. Arnold, "Afghanistan," 1985 *Yearbook*, p. 144.
90. Ibid.
91. Babrak Karmal speech, in FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 15 and 16 June 1981.
92. US Department of State, "Afghanistan: 18 Months of Occupation," Special Report No. 86 (Washington, DC, August 1981), p. 2; US Department of State, "2 Years of Occupation," Special Report No. 91 (December 1981) pp. 2-3; and Eliza Van Hollen, "Afghanistan," in *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs 1982* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1982), p. 160.

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6. *Christian Science Monitor*, 29 June 1981.
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10. *The New York Times*, 1 July 1978.
11. *The New York Times*, 26 March 1980.
12. London *Al-Hawadith*, 18 April 1980, in JPRS *Near East/North Africa Report*, 13 June 1980, p. 7.
13. UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Background Briefs, *Afghanistan Opposition Groups*, August 1980, p. 3; and *The Washington Post*, 5 January 1980.
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The Military Struggle

OVERVIEW AND TACTICS

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22. US Government sources.
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26. Paris *Le Monde*, 15 November 1983, in JPRS *Near East/South Asia Report*, 11 January 1984, p. 96.
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29. Girardet, "With the Resistance in Afghanistan," 6th in a series of articles, *Christian Science Monitor*, 19 July 1982.
30. Alain Chevalerias, "On the Borders of the Red Empire, Afghanistan," Brussels *Le Soir*, 28 December 1982, in JPRS *Near East/South Asia Report*, 7 February 1983, p. 78.
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34. Charles Dunbar, "Inside Wartime Kabul," *Asia*, November December 1983, pp. 29-31.
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110. Ibid.
111. *The New York Times*, 27 May 1983.

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120. *Tehran Keyhan*, 27 December 1984, in *JPRS Near East/South Asia Report*, 5 February 1985, p. 138.
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CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

1. "A Soviet Ambassador in Kabul Writes Us a Letter—Sixty Years Ago or Today," *Paris Afghan Realities*, August-September 1981, p. 2. This article was reprinted in *World Affairs*, Vol. 145, No. 3, Winter 1982/83, pp. 226-28.
2. *Ibid.*, footnote on p. 228.
3. Babrak Karmal, on his installation as President by the Soviets, claimed he had been in Afghanistan for several weeks before the Soviet intervention, helping arrange the Afghan overthrow of the Hafizullah Amin regime. Few Afghans or foreign observers believed this statement, suspecting instead that Babrak was flown in to Kabul by the Soviets after their takeover. In June 1984 a former Afghan career diplomat who had served in Moscow for three years after the Soviet intervention claimed that a Czech official had confided to him that Babrak indeed had been in Prague when the invasion occurred. See Abdol Majid Mangal, London *The Sunday Telegraph*, 24 June 1984, in FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 29 June 1984.
4. *The Economist*, 14 July 1984, p. 21.
5. Keith D. Dickson, "The *Basmachi* and the *Mujahidin*: Soviet Responses to Insurgency Movements," *Military Review*, February 1985, p. 42.
6. *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 17 December 1983, quoted in "Soviet Propaganda in Afghanistan," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, Report No. RL-142/84, 5 April 1984, p. 6.
7. *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 14 January 1984, quoted in *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, Report No. RL-142/84, 5 April 1984, p. 7.
8. US Congress. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. *Hidden War: The Struggle for Afghanistan*. Staff report by John B. Ritch III (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1984), p. 20.
9. Charles Dunbar, "Inside Wartime Kabul," *Asia*, November-December 1983, p. 47; for the situation in 1984, see Lee O. Coldren, "Afghanistan 1984. The Fifth Year of the Russo-Afghan War," *Asian Survey*, February 1985, p. 171.
10. Interview of Mohammed Ishaq, in *Le Quotidien de Paris*, 30 June-1 July 1984, in FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 6 July 1984. See also inter-

view of guerrilla commander Amin Wardak, *Wall Street Journal*, 18 December 1984.

11. Stockholm *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2 March 1985, in JPRS *Near East/South Asia Report*, 24 April 1985, p. 190.

12. For a good discussion of this Afghan perception of invincibility see Nike M. Kamrany and Leon B. Poullada, *The Potential of Afghanistan's Society and Institutions to Resist Soviet Penetration and Domination* (Los Angeles: Department of Economics, University of Southern California, January 1985), pp. 10-11 and 16-20.

13. *The New York Times*, 3 December 1984.

14. "Afghanistan at War (2)," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, Report No. RL-290/84, 27 July 1984, p. 6.

15. Aaron Trehub, "What's in Store for Wounded Veterans of the Afghanistan War," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, Report No. RL-282/84, 20 July 1984.

16. An unofficial (*samizdat*) journal, *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in the Ukraine*, in its seventh issue, provided the astonishing report shown in table 14.

Table 14

Purported Soviet casualties in Afghanistan from three *raioni* (districts) of the *Transcarpathian Oblast* in the southwestern part of Ukraine

<i>Raion</i> (District)	Killed	Badly Wounded or Maimed	Slightly Wounded or Frostbitten
Irshava	111	45	91
Svalyava	52	—	—
Mukachevo	122	145	—

This high rate of casualties, if at all accurate, probably is atypical of all districts in the Soviet Union. What the rate of casualties may reflect is confirmation that a disproportionately large number of young men from the Soviet Union's western borderlands—the Baltic republics and the western Ukraine—have been sent to Afghanistan. See Bohdan Nahaylo, *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, Report No. RL-9/85, 10 January 1985.

17. Julia Wishnevsky, "References to Afghanistan in *Samizdat*," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, Report No. RL-143/84, 6 April 1984.

18. "A Soviet Soldier Opt's Out in Afghanistan," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*, Report No. RL-121/84, 19 March 1984, p. 16.

19. Paris *Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan*, July-September 1982, in JPRS *Near East/North Africa Report*, 21 September 1982, p. 30.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

1. Interviews with Afghan emigres in Omaha, Washington, DC, New York, and Paris in October 1983 and January, March, and June 1984; all asked not to be identified for fear of reprisals against their relatives in Afghanistan.
2. Ibid.; and Hafeez Malik, "Memorandum of Conversations with Mr. Shah Mohammad Dost," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. V, No. 2, Winter 1981, pp. 67-68.
3. Interview with an Afghan emigre (who requested anonymity) in Washington, DC, in March and June 1984.
4. Malik, p. 68; and interviews with several Afghan emigres.
5. Interview with Afghan emigre.
6. Interviews with several Afghan emigres.
7. Biographic data drawn mostly from Ludwig W. Adamec, *First Supplement to the Who's Who of Afghanistan* (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck, 1979), p. 27; Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), p. 179; A. M. Baryalai, *Democratic Republic of Afghanistan Annual Saur 7, 1358* (Kabul: Government Printing Houses, 1979), p. 1125; and interviews with Afghan emigres, January 1984.
8. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 19 November 1982.
9. Biographic data drawn from Arnold, p. 182; Adamec, p. 12; and personal interviews with Afghan emigres, January 1984.
10. FBIS *South Asia Daily Report*, 1 February 1984; and FBIS *Trends in Communist Media*, 29 February 1984.
11. FBIS *Trends in Communist Media*, 11 July 1984.

12. Interviews with Afghan emigres in Omaha, Washington, DC, New York, and Paris.
13. Adamec, p. 29.
14. Interview with Afghan emigre, January 1984.
15. Arnold, pp. 182-83.
16. Biographic data mostly drawn from Arnold, p. 183; Adamec, p. 5; and personal interviews with Afghan emigres, January 1984.
17. *The New York Times*, 4 December 1984.
18. Adamec, p. 14; and Arnold, p. 184.
19. Interview with Afghan emigres, January-March 1984.
20. Biographic data drawn from Arnold, pp. 184-85; Adamec, p. 14; and personal interviews with Afghan emigres, January and March 1984.
21. Biographic data drawn from Arnold, p. 186; Adamec, p. 17; Baryalai, p. 1119; and personal interviews with Afghan emigres, January 1984.

APPENDIX B

1. Political Committee of Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan, "A Brief Biography of Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, the Revolutionary Leader of Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan," 1981 (?); and FBIS *Middle East and North Africa Daily Report*, 6 February 1980.
2. Jere Van Dyk, *In Afghanistan: An American Odyssey* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1983), p. 63.
3. *Aims and Goals of Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan*, brochure, September 1981.
4. Van Dyk, p. 63.
5. William Branigin, "Afghanistan: Inside a Soviet War Zone," *The Washington Post* (Part 7 of a series), 22 October 1983.
6. FBIS *Middle East and North Africa Daily Report*, 6 March 1980.
7. *Paris Afghan Realities*, No. 9, January-February 1983, p. 5, and London *Al-Hawadith*, 18 April 1980, in JPRS *Near East North Africa Report*, 13 June 1980, p. 15.
8. Lawrence Lifschultz, "External Resistance, Internal Conflicts," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23 January 1981, p. 25.

9. Munich *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 28 September 1981, in JPRS *Near East/North Africa Report* 29 October 1981, p. 22.
10. Van Dyk, pp. 60-62.
11. Stockholm *Dagens Nyheter*, 23 March 1980, in JPRS *Near East/North Africa Report*, 9 May 1980, p. 27.
12. Interviews with Afghan emigres, Washington, DC, and New York, January 1984.
13. Interview with Afghan emigre, Washington, DC, January 1984.
14. A copy of the directive was in the files of the Center for Afghanistan Studies, University of Nebraska at Omaha, in October 1983.
15. Paris *Afghan Realities*, No. 9, January/February 1983, p. 3; and *The Economist*, 8 January 1983, pp. 34-35.
16. *The Economist*, 8 January 1983, p. 34; and Christen Lundgren, "First Western Journalist Visits Central Afghanistan," Stockholm *Gnistan*, 23 December 1983, quoted in JPRS *Near East/South Asia Report*, 3 February 1983, p. 165; and Rome *Il Tempo* 7 March 1982, in JPRS *Near East/North Africa Report*, 14 April 1982, pp. 15-17.
17. London *Al-Hawadith*, p. 14.
18. John Fullerton, "Rift Among Rebels," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 29 October 1980, p. 20.
19. Munich *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, p. 23.
20. Branigin, Part 7 of a series, 22 October 1983.
21. Lahore *Nawa-i-Waqt* 25 July 1980, in JPRS *Near East/North Africa Report*, 11 September 1980, p. 7.
22. Zalmay Khalizad, "Soviet-Occupied Afghanistan," *Problems of Communism*, November-December 1980, p. 38.
23. Van Dyk, p. 64.
24. Brochure for the Afghan National Liberation Front, *Brief Biography of Professor Sibghatullah Al-Mojaddedi*, Peshawar, 1981(?).
25. Anthony Hyman, *Afghanistan Under Soviet Domination, 1964-81* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), pp. 132-33.

APPENDIX C

1. Interview with Jean-Jose Puig, French reporter, in Paris, 4 March 1984; and the 1983 issues of Paris *Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan*, *Afghan Realities* Paris and Peshawar editions, and Afghan Information Centre *Monthly Bulletin* (Peshawar).

2. Explanation of names of Peshawar affiliations:

Unity-of-Three Groups

1. Sayed Ahmad Gailani's *Mahaz-i-Milli-Islami*.
2. Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi's *Harakat-i-Enqilab-i-Islami*.
3. Sibghatullah Al-Mojaddedi's *Jabha-i-Milli Nijat*.

Four Unity-of-Seven Groups

1. Burhanuddin Rabbani's *Jamiat-i-Islami*.
2. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's *Hezb-i-Islami*.
3. Yunis Khalis's *Hezb-i-Islami*.
4. Abd-i-Rab Rasoul Sayaf's *Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan*.

APPENDIX D

1. Afghan Information Centre *Monthly Bulletin* (Peshawar), No. 20, November-December 1982, pp. 7-11.

2. *Ibid.*, No. 27, June 1983, pp. 2-3.

APPENDIX E

1. *The Letter from the B.I.A.* (Paris), No. 6, June 1983, pp. 10-12. For a good account of the early years (1979-80) of the resistance in Badakhshan province, see M. Nazif Shahrani, "Causes and Context of Responses to the Saur Revolution in Badakhshan," in M. Nazif Shahrani and Robert L. Canfield, editors, *Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies, University of California: 1984), pp. 139-69.

2. "Scottish M.D. in Badakhshan," *Afghanistan Forum*, New York, Vol. XIII, No. 3, March 1985, pp. 13-14.

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